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FREDERIC R. STEVENSON is attached to the Department of Health for Scotland. CARL FEISS is Chief, Community Planning and Development Branch, Housing and Home Finance Agency in Washington. This essay on Charleston and Savannah is part of a general study of early American town planning which they have made. "Nomad's Rest" in the July-December, 1949 issue of the Journal was also drawn from this. Here we have a chance to observe how the characteristic American phenomenon of expansion and congestion reacted upon two distinctive civic patterns.

CHARLESTON AND SAVANNAH

Many who visit the historic centres of the east coast associate the name Charleston with a unique glimpse of a particular kind of early American architecture, obtained in a group of old streets down on an otherwise unimportant promontory between two small rivers. The memory of that glimpse is not one of individually attractive buildings but rather of groups of buildings: street pictures of a townscape more harmonious than is usual even in the older American cities.

The general history of Charleston is familiar. It was founded as the capital of Carolina, both town and colony being named for King Charles II. After initial failures it reached prosperity through commercial enterprise, which made it the centre of a flourishing trade in colonial produce. Then it fell into unimportance as the industrial age superseded its activities by developing instead other coastal cities better sited for access to new industrial areas. Less familiar to many people is the fact that Carolina was to have been a "utopia," a century and a half before those of social reformers like Robert Owen and religious prophets like Joseph Smith, and that the street pictures of Charleston owe something to that forgotten chapter of colonial history.

The utopian constitution was the work of John Locke, the English philosopher, and his patron, Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, the political madcap of King Charles II's reign. It is recorded in two charters granted by that monarch in 1698 to the Proprietors of Carolina, of whom Shaftesbury was one. It was not a success, for while designed to assist development of the new colony, its main object seems to have been to prevent the growth in Carolina of a "too numerous democracy," which might in time rebel against the royal authority and so recreate the circumstances of the English Civil War, from which the two authors had recently emerged on the right side. In an endeavour to accomplish this, the constitution established a one-class society of landed aristocrats with a feudal system of land-tenure and government which would have been

obsolete even in Europe. "Landgraves, cassiques and barons," without knowledge or means to develop even a few of the thousands of acres they had been allotted, solemnly took possession of their estates, or sailed to Charleston with that intent, only to be laughed out of the colony by hard-headed planters from the West Indies who quickly took their place as the ruling class in a stratified society modeled on the West Indian pattern. But the utopia included a "Grand Modell" for a colonial capital and by good fortune this more or less abstract town plan, drawn perhaps as early as 1670, fitted its site and was followed street for street when, in 1694, the Proprietors instructed Governor Archdale to get ahead with buildings and fortifications on the promontory between the mouths of Cooper and Ashley Rivers.

The original "Grand Modell" has been lost or destroyed but copies exist, including one owned by the South Carolina Historical Society which was rescued from among papers marked for destruction at the city hall during the Revolution. It is almost identical with a plan of the town surveyed in 1739 (Fig. 1). A large "piazza" set on the crossing of two "main streets," each 70 feet wide, was to be the town centre. Behind were to be "secondary streets" 50 feet wide and "tertiary streets" 30 feet wide. On the 1739 map this piazza is clearly the central square on the crossing of Meeting House Street and Broad Street, these being "main streets," while amongst others Church Street is a "secondary street" and Tradd Street a "tertiary street." Creeks and marshes which interrupted the course of some of these thoroughfares are also clearly visible.

The charming architecture which lines all these streets today is not contemporary with their laying out. Most of it belongs to a period of reconstruction which followed a disastrous fire in 1740. In this fire 334 dwellings and a proportionate number of shops and warehouses were destroyed and it also sealed the fate of the utopian idea, for only men of substance with

backing outside the colony could survive such a catastrophe. From 1740 until the Revolution, even until the War of 1812, Charleston passed through a golden age of commercial prosperity in which its own distinctively stratified society emerged, consisting of planters, merchants, craftsmen, a few professional men, a labouring class partly in slavery and partly free, and a wide range of adventurers, whose state varied between great wealth and abysmal poverty. In many of these strata a commodious town house was a commercial and social necessity. It was also an object of ambition for industrious servants ready to begin business on their own account, for whom the developing colony provided rich opportunity.

Trained building technicians began to appear in Charleston early in the eighteenth century and a high standard in construction and design of houses was set, especially after the arrival in 1735 of Peter Chaffereau, a London architect. Robert Brewton's House at 71 Church Street, built in 1733, is the work of such an expert hand and the earliest example of a site arrangement which became typical of Charleston. The house is only one room thick and is set endwise to the street with its longest elevation to the south so as to catch the inshore evening breeze. Later, the south or southwest walls of such houses were embellished with two and even three-floored loggias.

Between 1730 and 1740 several hundreds of dwellings, warehouses, coachhouses and stables were built and many of the streets shown on the 1739 map were laid out and constructed, still following the "Grand Modell." Private capital saw to most of this development though occasionally the Assembly intervened to lay out important streets; but the land, as far up as "Charles Town Line," was publicly owned. In spite of the clearly defined town plan, encroachments on the public street were common and a regulation had to be passed against these in 1740. Occasionally, too, disputes arose over layout and in 1734 the Assembly had to determine the position of the harbour-front building line. Streets were paved with some kind of hard surface. Negro slaves probably did most of the work, both in street and house construction.

In one respect the "Grand Modell" was ill-adapted to its site. Cooper River turned out to be the easier to navigate, so that while the Ashley River front remained a marshy haunt of wild fowl the Cooper River front quickly became a harbour. This led to the establishment of commerce as the predominant "use" in adjacent streets and to a greater density of building there than in other parts of the town. This asymmetrical development robbed the central square of its proper function as the hub of Charleston's activity, and but for the persistence of the "Grand Modell" idea, the central

square might never have been built. It never became a "piazza" in the true sense. The bad American habit of treating such open spaces as convenient sites for public buildings prevailed over more ideal conceptions and in the course of time only a discerning eye could trace its originally intended form (Fig. 2). Meanwhile dense building in the harbour area, unrelated to street widths and street-block sizes, produced congestion, including the erection of multi-family dwellings. In 1735 a house was advertised "divided into four commodious tenements" and others followed. Lanes which had threaded their informal way through blocks behind properties were now treated as frontages without a thought of widening and so degenerated into niggardly passages. Today some of these have regained their charm and provide a foil to the formal layout of the streets.

Charleston was slow to develop an adequate harbour for handling its growing traffic. A storm in 1700 washed away nearly all existing landing places and to protect those that remained the government ordered all persons whose land fronted the Cooper River to build retaining walls. The sea wall thus provided was furnished with two public jetties each 20 feet wide but ships of any size had to be served from lighters. By 1710 a healthy trade had developed, mainly with the West Indies. Carolina sent building materials, barrels, tallow, pitch and tar, besides beef, pork, rice, and butter in exchange for sugar, molasses, rum, cotton and salt. Rice was becoming the staple product of the colony and in 1720 nearly 200 ships were loaded in Charleston harbour with goods for export. Big harbour improvements followed and the 1739 map shows eight jetties along the Cooper front. The fire of 1740 wiped out the whole trading area but fortunately for shipping interests the harbour made an anchorage and vessels could be tended by lighters during the period of reconstruction.

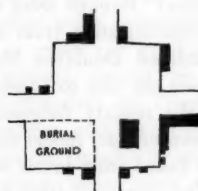
A copper plate engraved for the *London Magazine* in 1762 shows how the town looked in its full state of development based on the rice economy (Fig. 3). The houses of rich merchants and shipowners are clearly an important element and roof-top galleries for observing movements of ships are prominent. Although buildings are of various heights and sizes, the regular pattern of streets and particularly the long sea wall with its bastions group the whole scene into an architectural unity. The artist appears to have omitted the jetties, which must have added both liveliness and charm to this waterfront scene.

Public buildings appeared in Charleston early in the eighteenth century, for the most part on well chosen sites. St. Philip's Church, beautifully arranged to close the vista of Church Street (and incidentally to balance the waterfront silhouette), was completed in 1727 and is prominent on the 1739 map. The Council Chamber

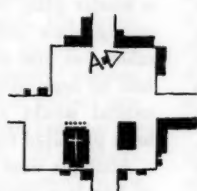


FIG. 1.

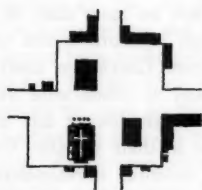
1739: MARKET BUILT



1761: CHURCH BUILT



1780: ARSENAL BUILT



1788: COURTHOUSE

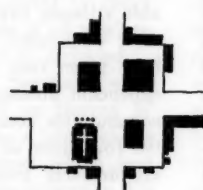
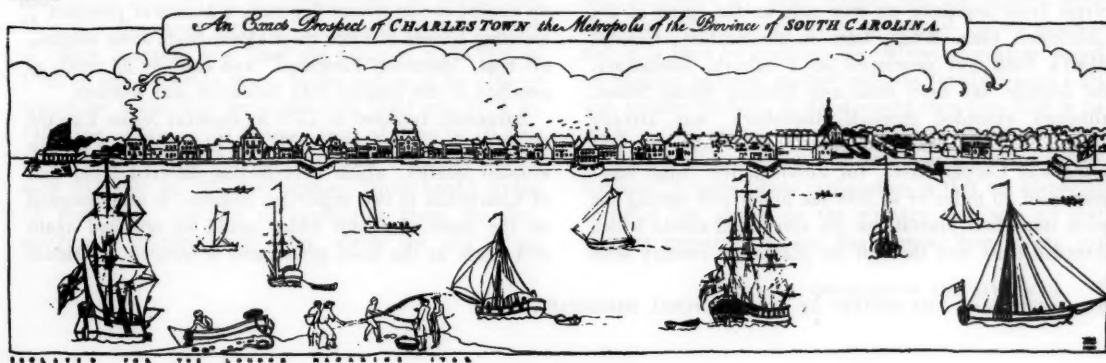


FIG. 2. Destruction of Charleston's central square by encroachment of public buildings . . .

. . . and survival of its true character around its perimeter (from viewpoint 'A').

FIG. 3.



terminating Broad Street and the Market House on the axis of Tradd Street are also prominent and bear witness to a keen sense of traditional civic design on the part of those who chose these positions. Not until the New Market was built in the central square in 1735 was this tradition broken.

St. Philip's deserved its site. Churchgoing was an important event in Charleston and worshippers streamed not only through the streets but arrived from their plantations at nearby jetties in long cypress canoes paddled by negro slaves, a scene which must have resembled the colourful spectacle still witnessed at Rättvik, Sweden, when the church-boats arrive from farm-hamlets across the lake. The parish, which was of the Church of England, embraced the whole province, and Sunday observance was carefully enforced. No school is marked on the 1739 map and Charleston lagged behind the other colonial capitals in providing educational facilities. At this time the only such provision was a class held by the minister of St. Philip's. Rich citizens had already begun to send their sons to school in England.

Otherwise social life was gay and varied. Rich citizens and planters lived in the rhythm of the seasons, spending summer in their country houses and moving to town for the winter. Dancing and musical entertainments were much enjoyed by this group but coarser pastimes included gambling, card playing and cock-fighting. Taverns were to be found in every street, some providing excellent fare which would have done honour to an older city. One, kept by a Frenchman, served French food and Madeira wines. All served quantities of cheap rum, and disreputable conditions which resulted were the object of constant attacks by the authorities. Shopping was an important activity, mainly located in Broad Street. Millinery, imported groceries, hardware, Madeira and Canary wines, jewelry, furniture and the latest London fashions for gentlewomen were amongst the wealth of goods displayed for retail sale.

The 1739 map shows a "high way" leading northwards out of town, connected to the end of King Street—not Meeting House Street, which was cut off from such connection by Colonel Rhett's land. This unsatisfactory arrangement helped to prevent Meeting House Street from assuming its true role as the spine of the Charleston plan. When, later in the century, Colonel Rhett's land was developed as a suburb, Rhettisbury, the damage had been done and Meeting House Street, although extended through Rhettisbury, was already relegated to secondary importance. Moreover, the real spine was Cooper River, for although the "high way" continued 20 miles or so into the hinterland serving the more important plantations, the rivers and creeks which threaded their way through the plantation country were

the favourite means of transportation.

As soon as building crossed the Charles Town Line the "Grand Modell" ceased to apply. Apparently none thought of repeating it as a unit even on a modified scale. Development was guided instead by the whim of the landowner and, characteristically, each estate as it blossomed into streets and houses retained his name with the prefix "village" or the suffix "borough." An exception in both respects was Hampstead, laid out by Henry Laurens in 1789 with a faint flavour of the "Grand Modell," including a central open space in the form of a "Mall." Wragg Borough, laid out in 1806 on the estate of John Wragg, followed the example of Hampstead by setting aside for public use two pleasant little parks, Wragg Square and Wragg Mall, which still exist as much-needed open space in the part of modern Charleston which later engulfed these little developments. Wragg Mall contains a fine series of uniformly designed ante-bellum villas called Aiken's Row which as street architecture is equal to anything within the "Grand Modell" area. But Rhettisbury, Hampstead, Wragg Borough and others were not co-ordinated into a master plan, the "high way" through them was in the wrong place and even communication from one to the other was and still is confused. Doubtless Shaftesbury, had he been able to foresee the size to which his little capital would grow in the century following, would have prepared for it an even grander model than he did.

Attempts were made to found other towns in the tract of Carolina which could be developed from Charleston. Their names sound very grand: Beaufort, Purisburgh, Jacksonburgh, Dorchester, Camden and Georgetown; but even by 1779 they are described by Nicholas Trott, a colonial lawyer who retired to England, as "inconsiderable villages, having in each no more than 20, 30 or at most 40 houses," although in more recent times they have taken root and grown. Charleston itself with its dependent plantations, many of which were whole rural communities completely overshadowing any attempt at the formation of villages in their vicinity, formed the architectural pattern of colonial development. Trott's description of Charleston in the full bloom of its eighteenth century youth makes pleasant reading. It has, he writes, a breezy site helped in freshness of air by tides up rivers; broad streets "opening a beautiful prospect"; dwelling houses of brick three floors high, some elegant, all neat, "genteelly furnished" and exposed as much as possible to the breezes with balconies and porches.

Savannah, founded in 1733 by General James Edward Oglethorpe, was likewise built to a plan having a certain utopian quality, which nevertheless differed from that of Charleston in two important respects. It was designed on the basis of a unit which could be repeated again and again as the town grew; and it secured a rational

division of the surrounding agricultural belt between all the settlers in workable acreages, not leaving this to chance purchase by the adventurous or to the caprice of grants made according to fictitious ranks. To each male settler was given a "town lot" of one acre, a "garden lot" of five acres, and a farm of forty-four acres. Further, the whole was entailed so that the less efficient were unable to dispose of their property and the more grasping were thwarted in acquiring additional acreage.

The project was in one sense an agricultural experiment, in another a piece of practical philanthropy and in a third a military expedition. Agricultural reform was already in the air in England; there were many interested in trying out a non-manorial system of field-division with an organic connection between town and countryside, and there was a strong subsidiary interest in the culture of certain crops impossible in the English climate, such as grapes, drugs and silkworms. Again, England was full of unemployment, including numbers of unfortunates ruined by the debtors' laws, and a means of relief by emigration to the colonies did not require great efforts to seek. With Spanish invasion of the North American coast constantly threatened, the Crown was ready to grasp any good chance to secure a new and well manned outpost on its southerly reaches. These three objectives the Trustees of this project proposed to combine, and having been granted land on the coast of Georgia, Oglethorpe set out with 120 colonists, a selected group whose needs and qualifications made them specially eligible. So many members of reputable families had incurred the misfortune of imprisonment for debt that Oglethorpe was able to choose his colonists man for man, building up a logical employment structure so that all the occupations needed to make the colony self-supporting and to enable it to produce goods for export back to England would be provided.

The town-lots for the first part of Savannah were laid out almost as soon as land could be cleared of trees and levelled on the site chosen, on a bluff above the Savannah River away from swamps which had given Charleston a reputation for being unhealthy. Of their arrangement, grouped in units of 40 round an open square, with 4 "trustee" lots for special uses, a good description is given by William Gerard de Brahm, His Majesty's Surveyor General for the Southern District of North America, who liked the place so much that in 1760 he built a house there. In the course of an official report he states that Savannah was "laid out 2115 by 1425 feet square in 24 Tidings each of them in 10 lots, in all 240, and 48 Trustee Lots, with 6 market places, each 315 feet by 270 feet square. Three broad streets 75 feet wide, running perpendicular from the Bay, centrically crossing each other, divide the city in six

equal Quarters: each Quarter has four Tidings, each Tiding is run through by a lane parallel to the Bay 22½ feet wide; each half-Tiding consists of five contiguous Lots. Trustee-Lots are divided from each other as well as from the Tiding-Lots by streets 75 and 37½ feet wide. The city consists of 400 dwelling houses, a Church, an Independent Meeting House, a Council-House, a Court-House and a 'Filatur.'"

A well known engraving by Peter Gordon, many copies of which are in existence, shows Savannah "as it stood on the 29th of March 1734" (Fig. 4). Although partly diagrammatic and drawn from an imaginary aerial viewpoint, this drawing appears to be truthful. The number of houses, about 90, is compatible with the number of settlers known to have been in the colony at that time and there is a notable absence of flatteringly large public buildings. Only two simple structures of that kind appear, standing in the middle of trustee-lots. Two clumps of trees have been left standing, perhaps to give shade; the streets and lanes are quite distinct, and uniformly designed houses, no doubt the product of Oglethorpe's military mind, stand neatly in rank directly on their building lines without front gardens. A military map of somewhat later date, which shows the town two "Quarters" larger than Peter Gordon's drawing and of the size described by de Brahm, has the additional detail of a cross-section which shows the relationship of building heights to street and lane widths and also the increase of scale and the punctuation which occurred when public buildings came to be erected in permanent form on trustee-lots (Fig. 5).

The most striking feature of the Savannah plan both as laid out by Oglethorpe and as it still exists, is the pattern of street, lane and square. Perhaps this is derived from Williamsburg, with which Oglethorpe must have been familiar, or it may be yet another echo of the "ideal cities" of the Renaissance which, in turn were a geometrical adaptation of the medieval cellular city structure of wards or quarters. But in Savannah both the acceptance of the town lot as the basic unit from which the plan is built up, and the reservations made for special buildings and special uses by means of trustee lots, represent a definite advance on what had been achieved before, at least in America. It has been suggested by some writers that the squares were intended as emergency forts in case of Indian attacks, but it is hard to imagine any defensive strategy based on holding so much ground once the fortified town wall was broken through. A stand would then have had to be made on the river bank, using perhaps the nearest row of houses as a rampart and manning the ships in the harbour. A more likely explanation is that the elaborate fortified line shown on the military map was all that defence required, leaving the planner free to lay out

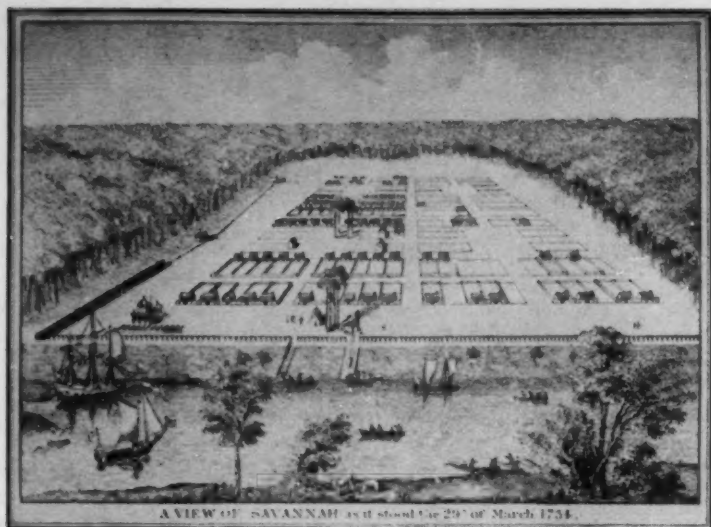


FIG. 4. Savannah and its system of streets and squares. How the squares were first laid out and treated. Note the clump of shade trees retained on one of them. Note, too, how streets and back lanes are kept distinct and the strict adherence to the building lines, without front gardens.

FIG. 5.

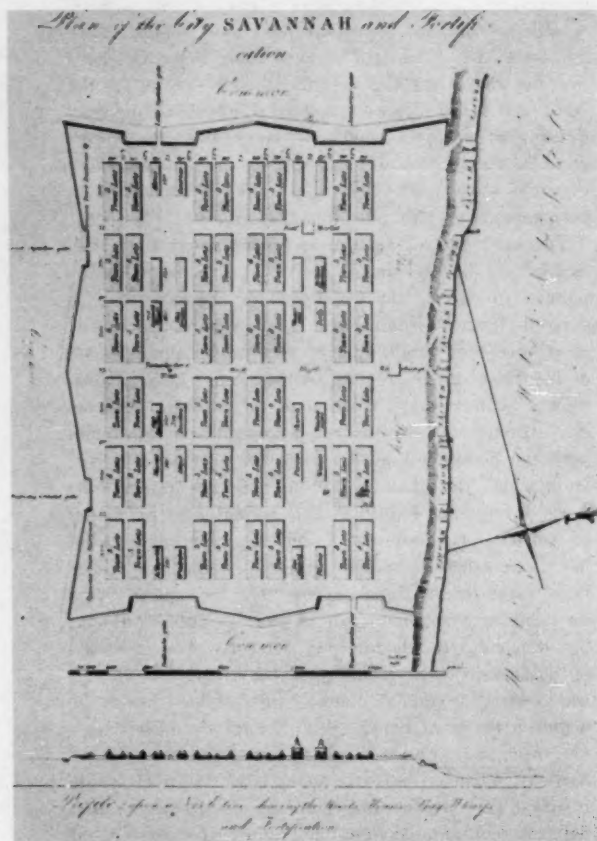


FIG. 6. How one of the squares looks now, in a Negro district where the original scale has not been lost. Note the interesting group of 18th-century terrace-houses and the survival of the tradition of no front gardens.

FIG. 7. Street architecture in Charleston and Savannah:



Charleston: East Bay Street houses with "porches."



Savannah: Oglethorpe Avenue terrace-houses.

the town within it on the generous scale which social, not military, requirements demanded.

Oglethorpe's colony lived an integrated social life far in advance of their time, not only through well adjusted land tenure, scientific agriculture and balanced employment structure, but the organization of public

services. There was a public mill for grinding corn, a public granary and storehouse, and a public nursery or Trustees' Garden from which settlers could procure mulberry trees and other plants for their gardens and where the colony's experimental horticulture was directed.

The organic part in the life of Savannah played by the open squares was likewise an advance on contemporary planning practice. Although the eighteenth century was the age of squares, they appeared for the most part in response to a desire for civic ornament, or, as in England, to provide noble frontages for aristocratic homes. Seldom were they conceived as integral parts of the town's arterial system. Yet this is what Savannah's squares have always been. Markets have been held in them; soldiers have drilled in them; children have played in them. In them the very life of this town has been fostered and to imagine Savannah without them would be to imagine it without its soul. One square has always dominated the others, Johnson Square, at the centre of the town as de Brahm describes it. Here was the church and other main public buildings and the sundial by which the official time was kept.

With the development of automobile traffic, an essentially different form from that for which the Savannah arterial system of streets and squares was devised, the original character of several squares, particularly in the central area, has been altered. They have become mere traffic roundabouts. Another material change has been the great increase in scale of the fringe of buildings. To-day the original character and scale can only be seen in one or two squares which lie away from the central area, and a drawing of one, in a negro quarter, is illustrated (Fig. 6).

As in Charleston, the presence of a harbour front along one side of the town quickly led to a concentration of commercial "use" there. But Savannah was fortunate in developing for commercial use a narrow strip of land along the foot of the bluff outside the area which had been laid out for residential use. Wharves, warehouses and all the bustle of waterfront activity were accommodated there, quite separate from the town above. This characteristic arrangement is shown on the military map and it persists to-day. A street runs along the foot of the bluff, the high wall of which towers above, lined with ballast stones brought over from England. At intervals, steep curving staircases connect the seafaring life of this weatherbeaten thoroughfare with the quieter life of the city above. No clearer or more natural definition of "use zoning" could be desired.

The demolition of Savannah's fortifications which occurred in due course brought the same benefit as the

same operation did to New Orleans. On their site appeared a fine tree-lined boulevard, appropriately named Oglethorpe Avenue. Soon afterwards the town doubled in size with a new district laid out south of this avenue and it is to the lasting credit of Savannah that Oglethorpe's plan was used for this layout, street for street and square for square. A large extra public open space was included which had been reserved as a burial ground, now known as Colonial Park. Even the next major development, which occurred just after the Civil War, followed the Oglethorpe plan while the latest and largest extension, made since 1890, retains a little of the same spirit and its enormous Forsyth Park is correctly aligned on the old main axis of Oglethorpe's Town.

The architecture of Savannah is more stereotyped than that of Charleston, clinging to the English terrace-house tradition which arrived in the colony in the middle of the eighteenth century (Fig. 7). Fine examples both in the eighteenth century manner and nineteenth century Greek Revival still exist, rising sometimes to four floors, their mellow brick façades spangled with lively shadows cast by the foliage of giant trees which line the sidewalks. Nineteenth century Savannah was fortunate in its architects, notably William Jay, who had been brought up in the sophisticated atmosphere of Bath, England, and arrived in Georgia in 1817. James Silk Buckingham, the social reformer, who visited Savannah about 1840, wrote: "There are many handsome and commodious brick buildings and an occasional private residence of brick and a few mansions, built by an English architect, Mr. Jay, son of the celebrated divine of that name in Bath, which are beautiful architecture, of sumptuous interior and combine as much elegance and luxury as are to be found in any private dwellings in the country." Public buildings did not fall behind this standard. The Ionic façade of Christ Church, dating from 1840, standing on the original "church lott" on Johnson Square, recalls the academic products of the Church Building Act of 1818 in London. The more famous and dramatic Independent Presbyterian Church, a reproduction of one by John H. Green erected in 1819 which had been destroyed by fire in 1889, draws more on the experience of James Gibbs' St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Of the Savannah Theatre, which stands on a "trustee-lot" on Chippewa Square, only the walls belong to the original building, which was designed by Jay in 1818. A relic of handsome civic furnishings remains in the old wrought iron harbour light at the east end of the bluff, recently restored to its original use.

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CITY PLANNING UNDER MERCANTILE EXPANSION: THE CASE OF CLEVELAND, OHIO

A majority of the cities of the American Midwest were founded as frontier villages after the Revolution. Their subsequent growth was directed by those expansive forces of mercantile and industrial development which attended the opening of the West. They hence reveal most clearly the designs characteristic of the nineteenth century, unobscured by pre-existing Colonial forms. For this reason the issues which arose specifically in the post-Revolutionary period may be here most easily isolated for study.

Such a study is of more than academic interest. By reason of the circumstances of its development, this frontier village became in the ordinary course of things the center of the present city. Due to the persistence of the physical forms created over the years the downtown area of the twentieth century city has been erected upon the framework of the pioneer community. Hence, for good or ill, we have been forced to abide by the decisions of the founders and their immediate successors on all major points. Many of the frustrations of the present reside in these facts.

Industrialization reached the Midwest with the introduction of the railroads in the 1850's, thus dividing the century neatly at its mid-point. It is true that the events after mid-century were largely instrumental in shaping the present town and in creating many of its difficulties. But a detailed study of the city's early history reveals a significant fact, that the designs and practices of the earlier mercantile period were in many respects decisive. The difficulties of the second half of the century, and in a measure of the modern city, were in a real sense foreordained by the plans and procedures established before 1850. While the history of Cleveland, Ohio is distinctive, it is by no means unique, and may serve as a case study of this phenomenon.

The founding of Cleveland was one small event in

the vast panorama of the settling of the West. It was designed to be the capital city of the Western Reserve of Connecticut, a curious passage in American history arising from the conflicting claims of the seaboard states to western lands.¹ The town was laid out during the summer of 1796 at the extreme western boundary of United States territory on land taken from the Indians only the previous year. Its owners were the Connecticut Land Company, one of the many groups of speculators called into being to stimulate the development of the newly opened territories. Cleveland was from its inception part of a gigantic real estate operation which affected the entire Midwest. It was, moreover, laid out by surveyors trained in the design of rural New England towns. They applied to the site at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River a traditional formula to serve the needs of an agrarian village, a design which proved to be too confined and rigid to accommodate the commerce soon to develop. Thus the town at its beginning was shaped by tradition and the pressure of real estate speculation, combined with lack of vision in planning. The facts are important inasmuch as these three elements repeatedly thwarted the proper development of the town in subsequent decades.

The operation of these factors may be seen in the plan by Seth Pease in 1796 (Fig. 1).² This design was obviously the result of coercion, first by the traditional formula which called for geometric regularity, and secondly by real estate speculation on which the very existence of the town was predicated. Neither of these was compatible with the terrain problem and the result was a series of reluctant and inadequate compromises. This Cleveland plan neglected the monumental site on the high bank of the lake and turned its back upon the view which was its most advantageous feature. The rectangular New England plan had to be truncated to fit the triangular tract between river and lake, creating

in the areas south of the Square an awkward series of indented and staggered plots. Finally, the mark of the speculator was placed upon the town by the mechanical pattern of the street design and of the lots themselves. As in the survey of the western country as a whole, this regularity served to facilitate sale of the land and was designed to that end.³ The less desirable tracts were taken up along with valuable ones, the work of survey was reduced, and the records greatly simplified. In Cleveland this regularity was modified only on the outskirts where a further effort to attract buyers was made by enlarging the plots on marginal land. The lots at the center were all two acres in extent but on the steep banks and to the east they ran up to four acres. In the "outlots," surveyed between radiating roads in 1797, the size of the units increased in proportion to their distance from the Square (Fig. 3).⁴ This strategy to attract buyers to all parts of the village was successful, but the rigidity thus imposed upon the town adversely affected its development for generations.

The fate of the suggestions of Augustus Porter is a revealing passage in the early history of this design. Porter was the chief surveyor under Moses Cleaveland. He proposed an elaborate plan which would reserve for public purposes all lots fronting upon the Public Square together with portions of the river front as thought advisable. His ideas were never executed. They were found to be incompatible with the speculative nature of the enterprise and these valuable sites were sold on the market like any other. The opportunity to preserve the civic center and important park areas along the water was thus lost early in the history of the village.⁵

In addition to these shortcomings fostered by tradition and speculation, the original design was inadequate for a quite different reason. Cleveland was from the first intended to be the capital city of a large hinterland, the Western Reserve itself, and was so located as to develop into a port and mercantile center. Though planted in a wilderness, it should have required little imagination to realize that as the country developed so would the town and its commerce. To make room for commerce and business whole areas of town were destroyed.

These deficiencies in the original plan of Cleveland would have been less serious had it been easy to rectify them at a later date. The processes of development, however, made this impossible. During expansion none of the original divisions was erased. As the lots were purchased by settlers, privately owned real estate values were created which the town council was at pains to respect. This meant that the new streets, when required, were laid out along the dividing lines between

lots. The oblong tracts around the Square were thus subdivided into smaller rectangles (Fig. 2),⁶ and the additional radiating streets followed the rear lines of the "ten-acre" lots. The cross streets here were governed by the lot lines which ran at right angles to these highways in each wedge of the pattern (Fig. 3). These stipulations of the first designs were carried out so consistently that the outlines of the original design may be traced in the streets of the central part of Cleveland to the present day.

For the first twenty years of its existence Cleveland remained a struggling pioneer community. Many things militated against its rapid growth. In the absence of roads and large boats on the lake the journey from the East was forbiddingly difficult. Once he arrived the pioneer still had to face the unmitigated hardships of the frontier. Every foot of ground had to be freed laboriously of its dense forest before the land could be planted or a cabin built. The "ague and fever" and the threat of the English on Lake Erie during the War of 1812 worked additional hardships. Nonetheless by 1815 there were 34 houses and 150 persons in the village.⁷

No pictorial record exists of the appearance of the community at this time. The only clues to its character must be gleaned from the accounts of the settlers and from Alfred Kelley's copy of the map of 1801 on which he recorded the houses extant in 1814.⁸ These sources convey the picture of a very primitive settlement with its few houses located in scattered clearings along the only two streets which had been cut through the forest, Superior and Water. The Public Square was only half cleared and this much was still filled with stumps. Except for three frame buildings recently erected, it was a town of log cabins which had hardly taken on the form of a village. During the next decade and one-half, however, its frontier character would give way to that of a dignified New England town.

Improved transportation hastened the settling of the whole area. Old roads were improved and new ones constructed. Steam craft on the lake replaced the dangerous small boats and, with harbor improvements at the mouth of the Cuyahoga, Cleveland was able to benefit by the change. In 1827 the canal reached Cleveland and five years later was pushed through to the Ohio River, linking the lake city with that great east-west water highway. In 1830 the population of Cleveland was 1075.⁹

In response to this growth the village was incorporated in 1814 and enlarged by the addition of a small tract to the south in 1829. Many new streets were required before 1830 and the processes involved in their design are revealing (Fig. 2). Until 1825 these were initiated by the town council and laid out along the division lines between lots, thus preserving the gridiron design of the

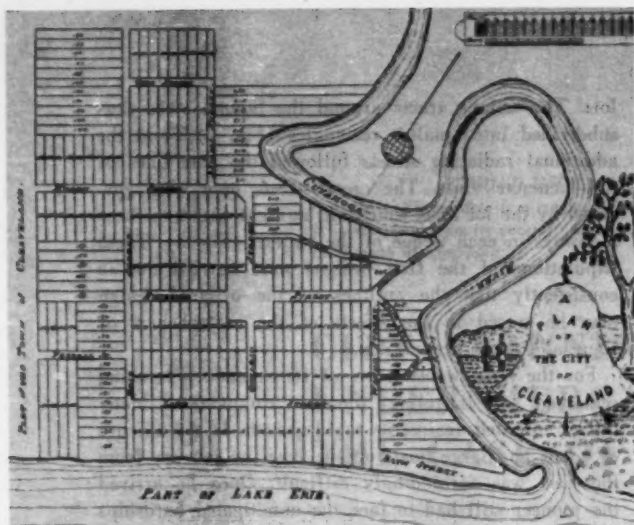


FIG. 1. Plan of Cleveland in 1796. (Western Reserve Historical Society.)

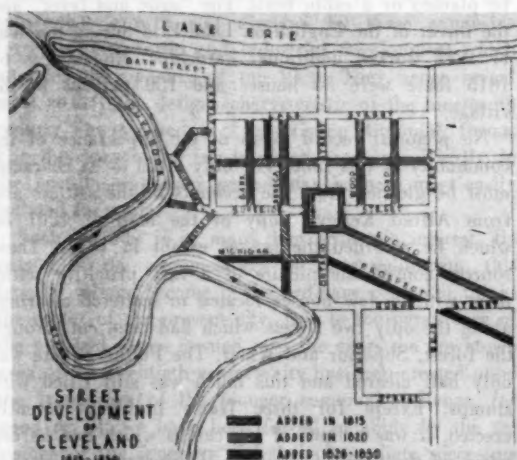


FIG. 2. Street development of Cleveland, 1815-1830.

central area while scrupulously regarding real estate values.¹⁰ But in the case of Euclid Avenue a radical departure was made. Central Highway (as it was called at this time) was already becoming an important route from the east and, for convenience, it was extended directly to the Square from its original terminus at Huron Street. This set a precedent which was followed by Prospect Street in 1830 and by other diagonal streets in later years. These cut across expensive lots, which the council was loathe to do and had thus far avoided elsewhere. It is apparent that in this quarter of the village their hands were forced by the awkwardness of the original plan which had not provided adequate communication across the triangular site. Together with the three radiating highways which had been laid out east of the town in 1797 these diagonal streets helped to alleviate this difficulty.

The sequence of these street additions, together with a few descriptions in the *Annals of the Early Settler's Association*, indicate the direction taken by village expansion in these years. The northwest quadrant of the town was the first to be built up. After 1820 the plot southwest of the Square was being used, as indicated by the extension of Seneca and the addition of Michigan. These were further extended in 1826, and in 1830 the southeast quadrant was opened by Prospect Street. Thus from its original concentration northwest of the Square, the village spread south and then eastward.

During these same years a limited degree of specialization of the areas within the town was reached. Aided by harbor improvements, including a dredged channel between piers and a deepened harbor, the banks of the stream from the mouth of the river to Superior Lane became a wholesale and warehouse district. Superior Street was the center of the retail district and was lined with stores and the first three hotels of the town. Northwest of the Square the early residences clustered around



FIG. 3.
Plan of Cleveland in 1825.
(Western Reserve
Historical Society.)

the first church and school buildings. The Public Square began to receive more attention after 1820. Around its periphery several of the finest houses were built as outposts of the concentration to the northwest, and a new courthouse was erected there in 1828. The first landscaping to be undertaken in the village was lavished upon the Square in 1827.¹¹

To clear the ground for this expansion, rapid progress had to be made in removing the dense forest cover. One of the early residents graphically describes this process in a report to the Early Settlers.¹² From his account of a "bee" on his father's farm in which a large party of neighbors assembled to cut and burn great piles of sixteen-foot logs, it becomes obvious that ground clearing was a pillaging operation. The forest was little more than a nuisance to the pioneers. A small portion was used, of course, for fuel and for building but the remainder was a serious hindrance to cultivation and to the opening of streets and house lots. In their enthusiasm they so denuded the town that trees had to be replanted and lumber imported from Canada within a few years.

The first pictorial records of the town of Cleveland are those of Thomas Whelpley in 1833 (Figs. 4 and 5). In his view of the Public Square looking west the length of Superior Street may be seen with the northwest quadrant of the village in the distance (Fig. 4). The buildings along Superior already range side by side, though they have the form of domestic buildings, giving to the street its stamp of a commercial center. That portion of the Square which appears is treeless and marked by unkempt paths and roads. His second view represents the center of the residential district northwest of the Square (Fig. 5). The houses are small and unpretentious but set in generous yards and grouped about the school and churches in an open pattern. The absence of large trees is striking.

Though modest, this was obviously a balanced design which was well integrated and intimately associated with the fields on its outskirts. In fact, it closely resembled the orderly New England village which had been its prototype. By 1833 the aspirations of the founders of Cleveland had been reached: this was the design they had visualized in 1796 and had staked out in the dense forest. Had the town remained a backwater in the coming period of mercantile expansion this ideal could easily have been perpetuated. But this was not to be its destiny. Cleveland was even then on the brink of a period

of far-reaching change and within a matter of years this momentary balance had been destroyed. By 1854 a new town had emerged, hardly recognizable as a descendant of this quiet village of 1833.

Any errors which had been committed in the design of the town to this point were of little consequence. But the situation immediately became awkward under the pressures of expansion and the activity of commercial enterprise. Whole areas of the town were transformed and new ones opened in the next two decades. Decisions crowded upon the town council and each one was largely irrevocable. Despite later developments, the legacy of these two decades continued to control the form of the central area with all the force of a profound inertia. Hence this period is a crucial one in the development of the town. It was at this point, after 1830, that events should have been carefully shaped and important precedents established. That their judgment faltered and their foresight was overtaken is clear upon the record.

The second quarter of the century is justly known as the "canal period." The network of waterways created in the 1820's and 1830's immeasurably benefited the state as a whole and especially the towns along their courses. Transportation costs were reduced, prices and profits rose, trade and the population figures were stimulated. With notable assistance from lake traffic and stage lines, the canals assured the rising prosperity of the city of Cleveland.¹³ Its population soared to 30,000 by 1853 and the area under its jurisdiction was repeatedly enlarged to accommodate that increase. By 1850 the entire tract designed in 1796 and 1797, including the outlots, was brought within the city limits. The expansion was climaxed in 1854 by the union of Cleveland with the smaller town of Ohio City across the river.

The map of 1835 by Ahaz Merchant records the first phase of this expansion, and several important developments may be noted. New lanes appeared west of Water Street to link the town more adequately to the water front, a response to the growing activity at the harbor. The rectangles north and east of the Square were subdivided by new streets. Additional radial streets were surveyed and old ones extended, and the first cross streets between these were laid down in the southeast of town. These followed the outlines of the ten-acre lots and became a precedent for a profusion of later ways.

So much of the expansion was orderly if somewhat mechanical, but a less salutary influence on the design



FIG. 4. The Public Square, Cleveland, 1833. (*Western Reserve Historical Society.*)



FIG. 5. Cleveland, St. Clair Street, 1833. (*Western Reserve Historical Society.*)

of the town may be detected here. Speculators anticipated the growth of the town if the council did not, and several important allotments were made and sold on the outskirts in 1833 and 1835. In the first of these a series of streets was laid out on a plan resembling that of Washington, D.C., within the first great loop of the river which became known as Cleveland Centre. It was apparently the intention to create a residential community here, but the depression of 1837 destroyed the scheme. The lots were sold by the sheriff and when business confidence returned they were occupied by warehouses and industry, the pattern being partly obliterated in the process.

The other large allotments were far less original in conception but left more serious scars upon the residential areas of Cleveland. No way had yet been provided by the laws to control such private enterprises and, as a result, real estate interests were able to thwart the orderly development of the town in specific areas. One of these lay between Lake and St. Clair Streets to the east of Erie, the second just south of the cemetery. In each case the large tract was many times subdivided by streets and alleys, reducing the lots to shallow building sites which were conducive to the ultimate formation of slums. This was a negation of planning and set a dangerous precedent, all too frequently to be followed in later decades.

The fourth allotment of interest at this time was of quite a different character. Just beyond the city limits the first experiment with a privately owned park was laid out in 1835. This was Clinton Square, around which adjoining lots were sold under elaborate provisions intended to preserve the character of the area. The plan was sound, constituting a sort of zoning operation which might have prevented the disintegration of residential districts. It was, however, never imitated in other parts of the city in this period. Nor did the plan itself succeed as Clinton Square also succumbed to the depression of 1837. Its houses were sold or moved away when the railroad was located nearby after mid-century. This ended once and for all the sole early essay in residential community design.

The pattern which began to emerge by 1835 set the precedent for subsequent development. Its extension may be seen in the map of 1853 (Fig. 6).¹⁴ Around the Square relatively few new streets were added to the already compact design, although a number of narrow alleys appeared in this district. On the outskirts a series of additional radial streets was laid out in the usual way and the cross streets multiplied. In the southeast the most rapid expansion was taking place and there a number of narrow and irregular streets and alleys was laid down with little discrimination. This was again a sure index of profit-taking in real estate, based on the precedents earlier established. It is pertinent to note that some of the worst slums of present-day Cleveland lie in this district.

This rapid lateral expansion was accompanied by im-

portant changes in the town's character and appearance. Mere extension in itself transformed the compact village into a sprawling town. The center became built up to the point of overcrowding: the river front was pre-empted by wholesale firms and the central area by retail houses. As the older homes were driven out by stores and offices, the residential district moved east and southeast along the new streets. Altogether mercantile enterprise transfigured the entire face of the community.

The goods which comprised the bulk of this trade reached Cleveland by way of the lakes or the canal. The wholesale district therefore was located on the water front where warehouses, piers, docks, and commission houses multiplied. River Street from the lake to Superior Lane, and Merwin Street in Cleveland Centre were bordered by these establishments. An unbroken line of wharves was erected along the bank of the river and became lined by additional warehouses. A few of the neighboring streets were put to use as the shipping business increased, but the river front itself remained the wholesale center throughout this period.¹⁵

This area fills the foreground of a large lithograph drawn in 1853 (Fig. 7). The open spaces between the scattered warehouses of the 1820's have by this time been filled. In the pervading enthusiasm for mercantile expansion, on which after all the prosperity of the town rested, no thought had been given to other possible uses of the water front. Porter's fruitless plans to reserve certain areas to public needs would have been most salutary. Without them, and without an overall plan, expediency has succeeded in shaping the entire area. No thought was given to the appearance of these river frontages and a mercantile slum was the result. This is the beginning of the chaos which marks the industrial and commercial heart of present-day Cleveland.¹⁶

This development in the "flats" had its parallel within the town proper in the multiplication of retail buildings. The newspapers of these decades record with enthusiasm the large volume of new construction, much of it devoted to commerce.¹⁷ Superior Street west of the Square remained the center of retail trade. Its appearance was recorded by Henry Howe in 1846 as one of a series of drawings of Ohio towns made in that year (Fig. 8).¹⁸ Almost no remnant of the domestic style of building which faced Superior in Whelpley's print of 1833 remains in this drawing. The street now was lined by three- and four-story brick blocks tightly massed and built to the edge of the sidewalk. In a word, Superior Street had become the typical modern commercial street within the space of some thirteen years.

The short blocks on Superior between the Square and the river could not contain the continuing expansion of retail needs. By mid-century the cross streets here were invaded and the original residential district driven north-

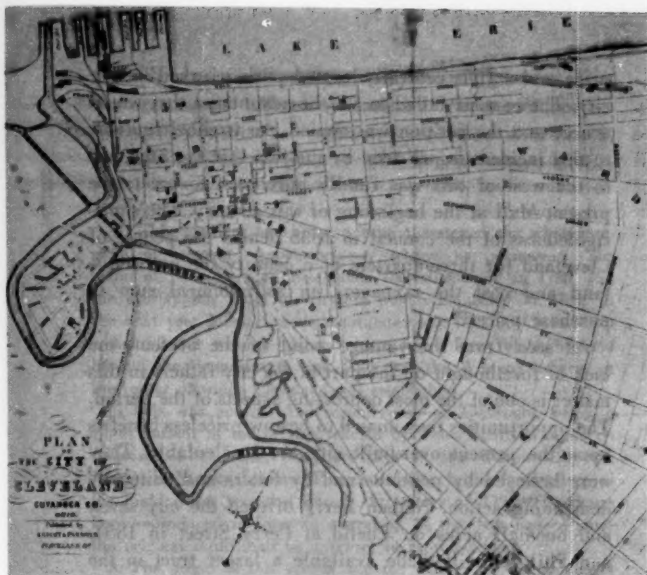


FIG. 6. Plan of Cleveland in 1853.



FIG. 8. Superior Street in 1846.



FIG. 9. The Public Square, Cleveland, 1839. (*Western Reserve Historical Society.*)



FIG. 7. Cleveland from the west, 1853.
(*Western Reserve Historical Society.*)



FIG. 10. The Public Square, Cleveland, 1870.
(*The Cleveland Public Library.*)



FIG. 11.
Euclid Avenue in 1865.
(*Western Reserve Historical Society.*)

ward to the edge of the steep bank along the lake. There it led a precarious existence for a few short years in competition with commerce and flanked by the railroad which came in after 1851.¹⁹ Meantime a second retail center had been established on Ontario Street south of Prospect in 1836, and moved northward in the next years. Thus the Public Square was invaded from the south and west, and its character as a village green which a painting of 1839 records (Fig. 9) was soon lost. A photograph of the west flank of the Square in 1870 shows how completely it succumbed to commercial enterprise (Fig. 10).²⁰

With the elimination of the northwest quadrant and the Public Square as residential areas, whole new streets were opened for this purpose. As early as the 1830's the Prospect Street district was developing as a residential neighborhood. In the 1840's Euclid and Superior east of the Square, and the streets to the north as well, were bordered by fine houses. The churches and schools followed these migrations to the east in a continuing process as the homes were evicted by commerce and as the population grew. A photograph taken in the 1860's of houses built a decade earlier shows the pattern which developed at this time (Fig. 11).²¹ The best houses were now of brick and stone and quite pretentious compared to their modest forebears. Wide lawns and formal spacing gave, to these protected streets, a dignity which reflects the rising prosperity of the mercantile age. The dangers of mechanical designs were nonetheless implicit here, and in poorer neighborhoods crowding and a deterioration of values quickly resulted under the aegis of real estate operations.

The years of expansion which transformed Cleveland not only redesigned the town but introduced for the first time the need for public services and utilities. These were new demands to which the management of the town was not geared. In consequence the provision for a public water supply, gas-lights, sewers and pavements was slow in coming and then only after repeated and irritated urging by the citizenry.²² By the end of the canal period, however, these municipal needs were being met after a fashion, but less success followed the public demand for parks. In the village of the 1830's, when each lot was generous and the open fields crowded in upon the residential section, there was little need for extensive parks. Nevertheless a notice in the *Whig* on May 13, 1835 indicated that some civic minded persons of rare vision foresaw the future need, "A petition will be presented to the Board of Trustees of Cleveland Village, at their first meeting after 1st July next—praying that a Public Square be opened and established—to comprise the ground between Superior and St. Clair, Erie and Bond St." At the time of this petition the area in question was just beginning to be claimed as a residential district. The ground could have been obtained at a minimum

price and a fine, centrally-located park reserved for the city. The council failed to see the advantages that would accrue and the petition was denied. An ironical footnote to this incident is provided by the fact that the area just to the west of this was finally purchased to create the present Mall at the beginning of this century. The shortsightedness of the council in 1835 denied the people of Cleveland for three-quarters of a century the use of the land and cost the taxpayers an astronomical sum in purchase price.²³

As seen from the vantage point of the present, the lack of forethought on the part of the city fathers in this matter is one of the most depressing aspects of the period. The opportunities they missed to bestow priceless benefits upon the present over-built city are incalculable. They were besieged by petitions and by letters and editorials demanding action. Nathan Perry offered the city seven and one-half acres on Euclid at Perry Street in 1854, and Philo Scovill made available a larger tract in the southeastern section at a reasonable price. Neither offer was taken; meanwhile the petitions multiplied. Despite the agitation, it was not until 1865 that funds were belatedly allocated and a small plot on the bank of the lake developed for a park. In other parts of the central area where open space was badly needed, values were high enough and the land so built over as to preclude the possibility of extensive parks. With the exception of the Mall and recent lake front stretches on filled land, no park facilities have been made available in this section of the city to the present day.

By and large it must be concluded that the overall development of the town of Cleveland was not a healthy one during the crucial period of its rapid expansion between 1830 and the industrial age. Too many physical obstacles to continued sound development were erected; too many dangerous precedents on which subsequent periods were to build were then established. These augured ill for the future of the industrial city and the modern metropolis. Their aftermath became painfully clear under the dynamic but destructive forces of industrialization.

From the vantage point of the present it is difficult to justify the shortsightedness of the policy of these decades. The reasoning of the time, however, is clear. The period was one of expansion and mounting prosperity based on commerce. The town was just emerging from a primitive state and all encouragement was hence given to progress. Each new sign of prosperity was hailed as an unmitigated blessing by the newspaper editorials. Each new enterprise and every increment in population was enthusiastically noted. They were proud of the new streets and the volume of construction. In their preoccupation with immediate returns and their eagerness for expansion, the possible long-range effects of their methods were ignored. Moreover, throughout the nineteenth century the freedom of

the individual in all matters was jealously guarded. That the exercise of individual initiative was sometimes incompatible with the common good was overlooked. Another three-quarters of a century was to pass before

these principles were worked out. By that time the damage had been done and the contemporary city had been saddled with its present almost insurmountable problems.

WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

1. This problem which for a time threatened the whole program of westward expansion was settled by persuasion. The claim of New York to Erie lands was abandoned in 1780, and the overlapping claim of Virginia was relinquished in 1784. In the next year Massachusetts capitulated and in 1786 Connecticut ceded all her western claims except for a large block of land beyond the Pennsylvania line. This was the Western Reserve at the center of which Cleveland was established.

2. This was actually the second plan of Cleveland, being a slight variant of the original sketch by Amos Spafford made on foolscap on the site. Both are now in the Western Reserve Historical Society Library. Pease's drawing is the frontispiece of his *Field Notes* recorded during the survey of 1796. The figure here reproduced is from an engraving of this frontispiece since the original is difficult to interpret in reproduction.

3. The origin of this system and the reasons for its popularity are fully discussed in Charles Whittlesey, "Origin of the American system of land survey," *Journal of the Association of Engineering Societies*, III, no. 10 (August, 1884), 275-280.

4. Though surveyed in 1797 no map of these outlots was made at that time. The first pictorial record is that drawn by Ahaz Merchant here illustrated. This map was the result of an actual survey taken in 1835 and is an authentic document for the period. A copy is in the Western Reserve Historical Society.

5. There is no indication that this far-seeing policy of Porter's ever received favorable action. In this connection it is pertinent to note that no member of the Connecticut Land Company settled on the Reserve. They had no genuine interest in either the Reserve or in the town itself beyond the sale of the land which would guarantee them a generous return on an investment.

6. This plan is a tracing of the plan made by Amos Spafford in 1801 at which time he re-surveyed the town and drew a map. To his plan have been added the streets designed by 1830 as revealed by the records of the times. Tracing executed by William Hazen and Robert Warner.

7. These figures are from James Kennedy, *A history of the City of Cleveland* (Cleveland, Imperial, 1896), 173.

8. The descriptions of the early residents of Cleveland are recorded in the *Proceedings of the Early Settler's Association of Cuyahoga County*. This group was organized in 1880. At its annual meetings talks and papers were presented recording early events. These are an invaluable record of the first decades although they must be used with due caution as they are recollections of events some fifty years or more earlier. In the case of those here used, Kelley's map substantiates the descriptions in all important particulars.

9. Charles Whittlesey, *Early history of Cleveland* (Cleveland, 1867), 456, is the authority for this figure, as he is for much of the early history of the town.

10. For several years after 1825 petitions for new streets appear in the newspaper, initiated by interested citizens. By no means all of these were favorably received. It is clear that the council was to this time in control of the design of the town on all important points.

11. Ara Sprague states in his reminiscences published in the *Annals of the Early Settler's Association*, I, no. 2, appendix, 75, that: "In the spring of 1827, I helped set out the first shade trees on the north side of the park."

12. George Watkins, "Early Days," *Annals, etc.*, II, no. 7, 18.

13. The tables of population, canal receipts, and volume of lake

shipping published by Samuel P. Orth, *History of Cleveland* (Chicago, Clarke, 1910), 700 ff. are convincing proof of the decisive role played by these transportation services before the advent of the railroads after mid-century.

14. This plan appeared in Knight and Parsons *Business directory of the city of Cleveland* (Cleveland, 1853), as a street guide. All important buildings are located making it a useful reference for the period.

15. The preponderance of these few streets in this matter is seen at once in the directories of the city before 1854. With few exceptions all forwarding and commission merchants, all wholesale dealers and produce stores are listed for these river front streets. With the introduction of industry into the "flats" after 1850 many warehouses were driven out and occupied buildings in the town proper.

16. A few rudimentary industries were interspersed with the wholesale houses here, the forerunners of the overwhelming invasion of industrial plants which followed after mid-century. No restrictions were placed upon the location of these early factories and a few of them were placed in the residential districts. This was also a preview of later developments when the railroads brought heavy industry into the heart of residential areas throughout the town.

17. A characteristic notice appeared in the *Herald* on June 13, 1844, "The rapidly increasing business and commercial importance of Cleveland are strongly evidenced in the many new and extensive stores, warehouses and shops which arrest the attention of citizens and strangers, and but keep pace with the growing trade that centers here from a large extent of flourishing country."

18. *Historical collections of Ohio* (Cincinnati, Bradley, 1849), opp. p. 116.

19. The newspaper accounts and the business addresses in the directories of the city make it possible to trace this evolution with considerable accuracy in the various parts of the city during this entire period.

20. The painting (Fig. 9) is of the *Cleveland Greys* and now hangs in the Western Reserve Historical Society. It represents the north side of the Square with the Presbyterian Church at the center. The photograph of 1870 and an *Atlas of Cuyahoga County* published in 1874 by Titus in Philadelphia (which shows every building in plan) illustrate the crowding which had overtaken the district around the Square by that date.

21. This photograph is of Euclid Avenue just west of Erie Street. All the houses seen here date from the late 1840's and 1850's. During the decade after their construction the landscaping and sidewalks here seen were doubtless improved. Otherwise the view is of an 1850 street.

22. After 1840 the newspapers are filled with demands and complaints which mount in volume as the years pass. They finally resulted in action by the council. Planking of the streets was begun in 1840 and wood block paving in the 1860's. Sewers were dug beginning in 1853, but until late in the century these emptied directly into the lake and river, causing serious pollution of the water supply. Two small reservoirs serviced the city in 1846 and a third and larger system was installed in 1849. In the latter year the first gas lines were laid out.

23. In the same year of 1835 Clinton Square was laid out, as has been seen. This was a private park, however, and even had it succeeded would not have benefited the public as a whole.

CARROLL L. V. MEEKS is an associate professor at Yale University, now on a Fulbright fellowship to investigate nineteenth-century architecture in Italy. He is a director and former president of our society. In his discussion of Litchfield, Connecticut and Williamsburg, Virginia, he makes it clear that although time has in one sense passed them by, they are still very much a part of a changing world. He thus touches on an intriguing problem: at what point does real preservation begin and to what degree can it be successfully carried?

LYNX AND PHOENIX: LITCHFIELD AND WILLIAMSBURG¹

The eighteenth-century towns of Litchfield, Connecticut and Williamsburg, Virginia share the qualities of colonial settlements; a minimum of display, a minute dash of monumentality, a humane order. Though the first is airily situated on a hilltop in northwestern Connecticut, and the other lies flat in its fertile tide-water landscape, they share a high level of civility. Their domestic architecture is full of resemblances which indicate that the variations allegedly due to climate may be less significant than those due to the tides of taste.

Both towns were laid out in the span of a single generation, Williamsburg in 1699 and Litchfield in 1720, so that they equally reflect city planning conceptions of the time. The earlier was planned from the beginning as a capital city and laid out in blocks intended to be almost urban in character, whereas Litchfield as a shire town was rural from the beginning. Its houses were in immediate contact with the pastures and fields of the owners with extremely wide commons between instead of streets. As we see them today both communities have their main axes laid out to the points of the compass. At Litchfield the major axis is north-south and the shorter cross axis is east-west (Fig. 1). The importance of these directions is reversed at Williamsburg where the shorter axis, the Palace Green, runs north-south. This was an afterthought, and was laid out to give the Palace an enhanced hieratic approach, whereas the wide East Street and West Street at Litchfield, which were made into parks in the early nineteenth century, were originally commons reserved for domestic cattle, particularly hogs. This difference in character is reflected in the adjoining buildings, since at Williamsburg with the exception of Bruton Church and the Palace itself, the other community buildings did not face on the Palace Green but on the adjoining Market Square or stood on even more remote sites. At Litchfield there was no market square and the common contained

the church, the courthouse and the school, which have subsequently been moved off, and now sit comfortably around it hobnobbing with stores and inns. At Litchfield, the north-south axis is not continuous like the Duke of Gloucester Street but jogs as it meets the Green and then continues its course parallel with its original line of direction. This device makes excellent sense, in view of its length which might otherwise seem intolerably long, and makes two intermediate axial sites available, one of which has always been occupied by the various buildings of the Congregational Church.² It is in effect an example of the limited vista so admired by Camillo Sitte.³

The early plan of Litchfield, 1720-25, shows the lots arranged in a rough gridiron plan with neither a formal central green nor a market square.⁴ The total number of lots was sixty of about fifteen acres each.⁵ The lots in Williamsburg were planned as "... sufficient each for a house and garden, so that they don't build contiguous whereby may be prevented the spreading danger of fire."⁶

The width of the original Litchfield streets or commons was extraordinary even if thought of from the point of view of grandeur, which was far from the intent. The grazing of livestock close to the house was a practical matter of imperative importance for the success of a town located in somewhat hostile country, and harsh measures were taken from the very beginning of the settlement to see that adequate fences were maintained.⁷ The present East and West Streets were 20 rods or 330 feet wide. The present North Street was 198 feet, and the present South Street, though but eight rods, was a generous 132 feet. It was not originally expected to be the main southerly street as there was another parallel one planned for a width of 330 feet. The widest of all, wider than Meeting House Street, where the principal buildings stood, was a short east-west street now called Gallows Lane, in the south-west sector of the town, 452

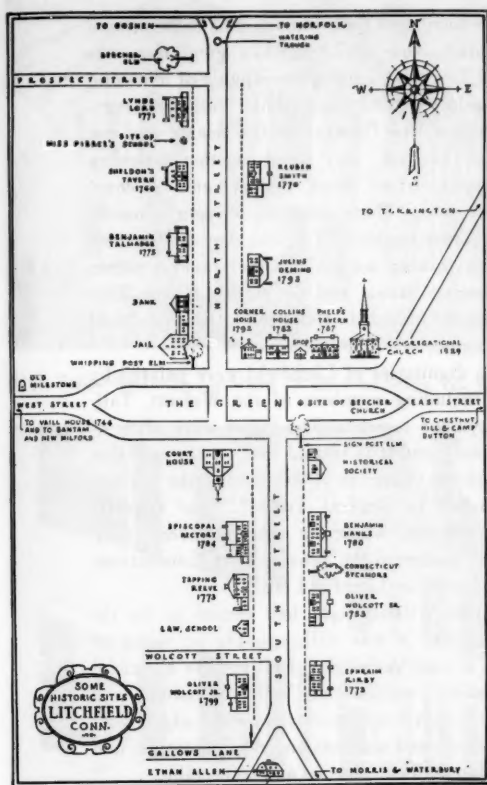


FIG. 1. Sketch Map of Litchfield (from A. C. White, *A Brief History of Litchfield*, New Haven, 1935) opp. p. 6.

feet wide.⁸ In 1852 the dimensions were approximately as follows: the total length of North and South Streets nearly 6,000 feet, the Duke of Gloucester Street in Williamsburg was about three fourths of this; the widths of North Street and South Street varied in the neighborhood of 200 feet, though the green was nearer 250 feet; the width of the Duke of Gloucester Street is six poles or 99 feet.

At Litchfield the full development of the original grid-iron plan was never realized as its growth seems to have followed the roads which led down the slopes to New Milford, Torrington and Waterbury. Also curious is the fact that the first map of Williamsburg does not show the developed street plan, which expanded in a regular way as the town grew (Fig. 2).

The present magnificent tree-lined streets of Litchfield were permitted by the original plan, though not presumably foreseen. But such ample dimensions were not left wild forever. Henry Ward Beecher, one of Litchfield's famous citizens, wrote of the early settlers, "they laid out their streets and staked off their village commons with such generous breadth that they remain the

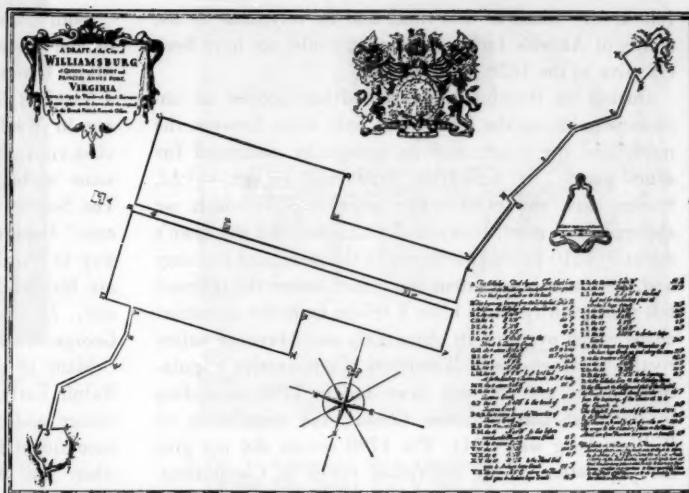


FIG. 2. Map of Williamsburg, 1699. (Frontispiece from Wm. A. R. Goodwin, *A Brief and True Report Concerning Williamsburg . . . Williamsburg*, 1940.)

delight of residents and the admiration of strangers to this day."⁹ This was written during Beecher's pastorate of the Congregational Church in the 1820's when he was fostering the laying out of the parks and the planting of trees. The transformation of the old village to its present tidy elegance was largely the work of the nineteenth century. A tree planting program had, however, begun in the 1790's under the influence of James Hillhouse of New Haven, who had by that time initiated his famous planting of elms in New Haven, where it was admired by such Yale men as John C. Calhoun and Oliver Wolcott, Jr., each of whom planted some trees in Litchfield while students at the Tapping Reeve Law School.¹⁰ In the 1820's considerable work had been done to drain the alder swamps in the common lands, but the center of the streets between the parallel dirt roads was, it is presumed, still burdened by unsightly loose stone and brush.¹¹

Between 1820 and 1827 the buildings were taken off "The Green," as the central area of the old Meeting House Street had come to be called. The third building of the Congregational Church was erected facing the green in a situation hardly more prominent than that of the tavern or the shops.¹² The grading, fencing and setting out of trees on this green was done between 1835 and 1858.¹³

It is evident that we owe the sweeps of lawn bordered by orderly ranks of elms, sycamores and lindens to a post-colonial aesthetic, the source of which does not seem to be the English city planners of the eighteenth century, but more probably a French urban ideal such as could have been seen by visitors to Paris, Nancy and Montpelier.¹⁴ The influence of the English landscape architects of the late eighteenth century was not much

felt in city plans at this time, and its reflection in the works of Andrew Jackson Downing could not have been effective in the 1820's.¹⁵

During the Revolution, Litchfield had become an important point on the inland and only route between the north and the south, and its prosperity continued for some years; its industries producing *papier mâché*, beaver hats, and clocks. The improvements which we appreciate so much today and which befitted the town's status in 1810 as the fourth city in the state, and a county seat, were to a large extent completed before the railroad left it in security on its hills, a refuge from the industrial chaos which overtook its apparently more favored valley rivals, Torrington and Waterbury. Comparative population figures are not very exact but in 1790, according to the first United States Census, the population of Williamsburg was 1,344. The 1790 census did not give the population of the individual towns in Connecticut. The reverse is the case in the second census of 1810 which gives for the town of Litchfield 4,639 inhabitants, but does not report on the town of Williamsburg. (In the latter year the City of New Haven had a population of 5,772.)

Both towns, in their well-balanced eighteenth century way, were characterized by the early foundation of significant educational institutions. William and Mary College has survived and its fame is enduring, whereas the two chief cultural foundations of Litchfield have passed away. The best known was the Tapping Reeve Law School begun in 1782, the first law school in America and probably in the English speaking world.¹⁶ The modest schoolhouse in which the classes met has been restored. From its portal a prodigious list of great men graduated to mold the course of law in this country. These included many distinguished Southerners—the vice-presidents: Aaron Burr, brother-in-law of Tapping Reeve, and John C. Calhoun; six cabinet officers; twenty-six United States senators; ninety members of Congress and many others such as S. F. B. Morse and Horace Mann. It has been said that the springing-up of such a school in Connecticut was because its people were of a particularly litigious spirit. The attractions of the law school to the young men of the country were reinforced after 1792 by the opening of Miss Sally Pierce's Female Academy, which did not close until 1833. It was a pioneer in education for women and for years the only one of its kind in the United States. The girls were to be seen on their daily walks accompanied by flutes and flageolets. The students of the two schools gave balls for each other in the taverns. The Southern law students contributed to the colorfulness of the scene as they often wore pink gingham frock coats. Litchfield could boast in 1792 of a public library. All of these reflected glory on the town, and made it in its quiet way a Williamsburg of the North.

Both towns contributed their famous sons to the drama of the Revolution. One of Litchfield's great men was Major General Tracy, who was quite capable of matching a Virginia Randolph in courtesy. While both were serving in Washington, the General in the Senate and his vis-à-vis in the Congress, they stood together watching some mules being driven down Pennsylvania Avenue. The Southerner said, "There go some of your constituents." General Tracy replied, "Yes, Sir, they are on their way to Virginia to keep school."¹⁷ Other famous names are Harriet Beecher Stowe, and the signer, Oliver Wolcott, Jr. Visitors included Hamilton, Lafayette and George Washington.

Many of the dignitaries of Litchfield were painted by Ralph Earle, including members of the Wolcott, Tallmadge and Seymour families. The ladies were often of exceptional beauty and it is related that on one occasion when the Wolcotts were in Washington, the British Minister remarked to General Tracy, "Your countrywoman, Mrs. Wolcott, would be admired even at St. James's." "Sir," answered the Senator from Connecticut, "she is admired even on Litchfield Hill."¹⁸

By 1798, after Williamsburg had ceased to be the capital of Virginia, it was still possible to relate of Litchfield that it was "A delightful village, on a fruitful hill, richly endowed with schools both professional and scientific, with its venerable governors and judges, with its learned lawyers, and senators and representatives and with a population both enlightened and respectable. . . ."¹⁹

The comparison of these two towns to the Lynx and the Phoenix, sums up their divergent histories. The glory of Williamsburg faded until the restoration began in the twentieth century, a literal rebirth from the ashes, whereas Litchfield has had a continuous life. When it ceased to be important as an industrial and educational center its fine old houses continued to be occupied by the descendants of its original builders, and in the 1870's it became a fashionable and attractive resort town. Somewhat leanly but with dogged will to survive, building there has never ceased. Its remarkably homogeneous inhabitants, cultured and prosperous, continue to be active in national affairs. Families whose business interests lay in the nearby industrial towns often continued to make Litchfield their place of residence. Both communities, now, in spite of their dissimilar pasts, have in common a visual and historic appeal to visitors which has given them a new life, though not as vigorous as in the eighteenth century.

America's principal building material, wood, was used in the eighteenth century buildings of both towns, though the grander capital city used brick for its principal buildings, in a way which did not occur in Litchfield until the next century. Nevertheless, wooden domestic architecture is characteristic of both and as the history of



FIG. 3. Tallmadge House, Litchfield. (*White Pine Series*, Vol. V, No. 3.)



FIG. 4. Sheldon Tavern, Litchfield, (Wayne Andrews, No. 582.)

the two has shown, wood can be more permanent than brick. At the close of the 18th century the Litchfield builders seem to have gloried in using gigantic stones for the foundations of their more elaborate houses. In "The Lindens," 1793, and the Abbey House, 1832, the desire to emulate Baalbek is suggested by the appearance of monoliths over twenty feet long. But no wholly stone building appeared, in spite of the good neighboring quarries, for many years and following the colonial custom brick was customarily reserved for the chimneys and fireplaces. The wooden houses of both cities share many elements; three-, four-, and five-bayed façades; one- and two-storied elevations; gambrel and hipped roofs; dormers pitched, and pedimented.

Climatic variations are not as striking as conventional views have assumed. Presumably the hotter, more humid climate of Virginia would, if climate were a major concern to the builders, have led to uniformly high ceilings, more ample fenestration, and a great number of outdoor



FIG. 5. Apothecary Shop, Litchfield, (*White Pine Series*, Vol. V, No. 3.)



FIG. 6. Dr. Davidson's Apothecary Shop, Williamsburg. (R. Garrison.)

living areas such as the porticos so common in the eighteenth-century England. But the ceiling heights are similar, in both towns, the windows are not more numerous, cross-ventilation was not more emphasized in one town than the other. The great porticos, oddly enough, did not appear at all in Williamsburg but are found in Litchfield in the Butler House of 1792 and the Tallmadge house of 1775, to which slender columned wings were added, it is said, after a visit to Mount Vernon (Fig. 3). In our age, which has raised Jefferson's interest in the gadget to a religion and which has developed a whole industry around air-conditioning, it is hard to realize that another age might have been preoccupied with more serious matters than physical comfort (a resident of Litchfield was massacred by neighboring Indians in 1723). It would seem to be a human trait to rationalize aesthetic preferences into functional necessities, the greater ceiling heights of the late eighteenth century were, like the greater deference to symmetry, expressions of

the desire for greater magnificence in a time of growing luxury. The ballroom was added to the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg in 1751 and the Wadsworth House in Litchfield of 1799 has a ballroom on the second floor. It is remarkable that the elaboration of Palladian detail which occurs in the houses built or remodelled by William Spratt in the 1790's had no parallel in the domestic architecture of Williamsburg (Fig. 4).²⁰

The relative absence of porches and porticos, which startles many visitors to Williamsburg, may well be due to the decline in the importance of the city after it ceased to be the capital. The use of these classical forms is a feature particularly characteristic of the late eighteenth century, and hence are frequent in Litchfield where much work was done after the Revolution.²¹

With the exception of Spratt, no other Litchfield architect's name has come down to us. The architects of Williamsburg in the eighteenth century seem only slightly better documented, excepting those of the college building. James Wray and Richard Taliaferro are named in a document of 1749 in connection with estimates for repairing the Governor's Palace.²²

The close similarity of building in the two towns is further shown by a comparison of the only remaining eighteenth-century shop at Litchfield with those of the same period in the capital city. The Old Apothecary Shop, also known as the "Ye Old Curiosity Shoppe," was built in 1781 for Dr. Reuben Smith (Fig. 5). Its two bowed windows under a common hood flanking a wide doorway are like the similar front of Dr. Blair's Apothecary Shop, on the Duke of Gloucester Street, and even more closely like Dr. Davidson's Apothecary's Shop, on the same street, which unlike Dr. Blair's and like Dr. Smith's is entirely of wood (Fig. 6). The Litchfield example has its gable end to the street like Dr. Blair's, and is built on a foundation of large stone blocks. All three of these examples are of course variants of a familiar English shop front tradition, of which many graceful Regency examples have survived.

To the same extent that the Palace and the State House overshadow any comparable eighteenth-century buildings in Litchfield, the Bruton Parish Church eclipses the eighteenth-century churches of the New England village. A Church of England edifice, the only church in the town, known as the "Court Church," Bruton Church was of an amplitude and dignity that the wooden meeting houses could not rival. At Litchfield by 1779 when Williamsburg had ceased to be the capital there were two meeting houses, one to accommodate the Congregationalists and one for the Episcopalians. The Episcopal Church, St. Michael's, was a mile from the center of town, and temporarily closed that year due to the unpopularity of that denomination during the early years of the Revolution. It was a small wooden building look-

ing like a house with its two rows of small-paned sash. Its only differentiating features were the absence of chimneys and a particularly wide door on the long façade. It had neither steeple nor belfry and was, at that time, thirty years old. The Congregationalists, however, were enjoying the use of their second edifice, located in the common, at the head of South Street. It had been built in 1761-62 and was sixty by forty-five feet, with a steeple of the Farmington type containing a clock and bell installed five years previously.

The tapering spire, so essential, we think, to the dignity and function of a colonial church, was not always within the means of the builders. Litchfield had achieved a spire in 1762, but Bruton Parish Church (1711-1716) did not achieve its, as an addition, until 1769. There is reason to think that spires sprout in cycles; a later outburst occurred just preceding the Civil War. The second building of the Litchfield Congregational Church seemed an imposing and wonderful building to some of its younger parishioners even at the end of its days, with its galleries and suspended sounding board over the pulpit.²³ This building was succeeded in 1827-29 by the third building which after various vicissitudes still stands, like Bruton Church, extensively restored and offering in its elegance a parallel to the magnificence of Bruton which was described a century earlier as, "adorned as the best churches in London."²⁴

We have been comparing two physical manifestations of that eighteenth-century standard of civility which spread across all the oceans and found fair embodiment in such diverse climates and *polis* as Litchfield and Williamsburg. Whereas, today, the Southern capital gives us an illusion of charm and serene order, it has, like all phoenixes, a mythological aspect; it is not wholly real. Its enjoyable make-believe suffers by comparison with the genuine natural effect of Litchfield which bears in its churches and public buildings the record of life, its wrinkles, and its graying hair; which are accompanied by signs of youth and the imprint of succeeding tastes and fancies, each of them believed in by their creators with all heartiness. It is good for a machine-ridden society to witness another way of life. It is fatal to regard their forms as anything but museum pieces. Litchfield is healthier and its lesson is more compelling. However, if we can look at both of these places, to find in them some principles worthy of emulation in our own terms and circumstances, we are wise. Lewis Mumford in his comments on the twentieth-century community of Fresh Meadows finds in it principles which are also admirably expressed in our eighteenth-century towns.²⁵ All three of these places seem to exhibit, each in its own terms, mythological, organic, or modern, a vision of order and harmony seasoned by a variety of color, form and material, animated by irregularities which produce pleasing

contrasts; a comfortable feeling of enclosure, not limited by mechanical regimentation, nor too unconfined to be grasped; a pronounced invitation to outdoor life in a setting nicely saturated with foliage. In all but one of

these communities the culture seems real, because people are taking part in it, moulding, modifying, creating, proudly and freely, not prostrated in nostalgic reverence.

YALE UNIVERSITY

1. The paper is based upon a lecture given at Colonial Williamsburg in February, 1950.

2. At Litchfield the idea of disencumbering the green was not thought of until the 1790's and not realized until the 1820's. The first church, courthouse and schoolhouse stood nearly in the center of Meeting House Street, now East and West Streets, the courthouse on the axis of Town Street, the church east and the schoolhouse west. Alain C. White, *The History of the Town of Litchfield, Connecticut, 1720-1920* (Litchfield, 1920), p. 15.

3. Camillo Sitte, *The Art of Building Cities* (New York, 1945).

4. White, *op. cit.*, frontispiece.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 15. There is a good discussion of the methods used in neighboring communities for the allocation of lands in A.N.B. Garvan, *Architecture & Town Planning in Colonial Connecticut* (Yale University Press, 1951). . . It is hoped that F. R. Stevenson and Carl Feiss, "The Planned Community: A North American Heritage," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 8, No. 3-4, July-December, 1949, p. 17, will shortly be followed up by the early publication of more portions of their pioneer work, the manuscript of which I have happily been able to consult. [Ed. Note: See Stevenson and Feiss, "Charleston and Savannah," in the present issue.]

6. Wm. A. R. Goodwin, *A brief and true report concerning Williamsburg . . .* (3rd ed., Williamsburg, 1940), p. 29. Additional information on the original plan of Williamsburg was most graciously supplied by Mr. A. Lawrence Kocher. He says that it provided, ". . . that the houses be built freestanding, each on a half acre of ground, each set back at a given distance from the street line, all to be enclosed with fencing four feet high."

7. White, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 15. The width of the streets and the size of the squares varied a good deal from town to town, presumably in relation to its intended character. In the plan of New Haven as laid out by a surveyor, John Brockett, dated 1641, the area arranged in a pattern of nine blocks was one-half mile square. Each of the nine squares was about 50 rods. The bounding and dividing streets were all about four rods or 66 feet. The house lots ranged from the size of those at Williamsburg upwards but never to the fifteen acres of Litchfield. Specific ordinances to control building apparently did not exist. The New Haven plan is considered masterly in relation to other Colonial plans. The central square combines in its huge area all the functions of a common: churches, graveyard, market, courthouse, school, and common pasturage. It is still under the control of the descendants of the original proprietors rather than that of the city council. Functionally New Haven was also a capital city into the nineteenth century, but unlike both Williamsburg and Litchfield its prosperity was from the beginning partly commercial. Reproductions of the New Haven plans are to be found in Dean B. Lyman's, *An Atlas of Old New Haven* (New Haven, 1929).

9. Alain C. White, *A Brief History of Litchfield* (New Haven, 1935), p. 6. In subsequent references the two works by Alain C. White will be referred to in short form by their dates as "White, 1920," and "White, 1935."

10. White, 1920, p. 168.

11. White, 1920, p. 175.

12. White, 1920, pp. 37, 171, 175.

13. White, 1920, p. 168. Systematic planting of trees was already an old story in New Haven, where it had begun on a large scale in 1759. G. D. Seymour, *New Haven, 1942*, p. 82.

14. The suggestion is Christopher Tunnard's.

15. Downing's first publication was *A treatise on the theory and practice of landscape gardening adapted to North America* (New York, 1841).

16. White, 1920, p. 102.

17. *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

18. White, 1920, p. 148.

19. White, 1920, p. 92.

20. The information about William Spratt is exceedingly scanty and his status is highly uncertain. Two notices appeared in the *Litchfield Monitor* as follows: "October 1793—An apprentice is wanted immediately to the joiner's business. An able faithful lad 15 or 16 years of age may depend on constant employment, proper instruction and generous treatment. Apply in Litchfield to William Spratt."

1797 "Journeyman joiners. Two or three who will work faithfully and are handy may find employ and adequate wages by applying to the subscriber at Captain Catlin's in Litchfield. William Spratt." These are both cited by Charles M. Andrews in *Old Houses of Connecticut* (New Haven: National Society of Colonial Dames, 1923), pp. 425 ff. Spratt is variously referred to as a Scot and a Hessian, and sometimes called "Spratz." He is said to have been a soldier in the revolutionary war and to have been employed by the Deming family, their relations and friends. He is said to have been responsible for the design of the following Connecticut buildings: Farmington, The Samuel Cowles House; East Haddam, The Epaphroditus Champion House, the Congregational Church, 1791-1794; New Milford, the Boardman House; and in Litchfield, the Courthouse of 1797, the Deming House 1793, and the remodeling of the Shelton Tavern, 1800. J. Frederick Kelly, *Early Connecticut Meeting Houses* (New York, 1948), vol. 1, pp. 118 ff., makes no mention of the legend that the East Haddam church was designed by Spratt or Spratz, although the same author repeats the traditional references in respect to the Litchfield and Farmington Houses mentioned above in his *Architectural Guide for Connecticut* (New Haven, 1935).

21. See Fiske Kimball, *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies, and of the Early Republic* (New York, 1922), pp. 97 ff and pp. 220 ff.

22. Goodwin, *op. cit.* p. 212. See also Thomas T. Waterman, *The Mansions of Virginia, 1706-1776* (Chapel Hill, 1945), and Fiske Kimball's remarks in the *Art Bulletin*, vol. XXVIII, no. 3, pp. 205 ff. The whole problem is greatly obscured and likely to remain so since the distinction between the responsibilities of the various persons engaged with eighteenth century edifices was ambiguous and continued to be so in this country well into the nineteenth century. The mention in a document of a name in connection with a building may mean: designer; the one who presented plans secured from some unnamed source; the builder; or even one of several builders. Sidney M. Stone of New Haven, variously: contracted for the erection from someone else's plans, or designed and built, or simply designed but did not build, church edifices in the Connecticut area in the 1830's, '40's, and '50's.

23. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Autobiography*, vol. 1., p. 211, described its impressiveness in a passage quoted by J. Frederick Kelly in *Early Connecticut Meeting Houses* (New York, 1948), vol. 1, p. 277.

24. Goodwin, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

25. Lewis Mumford, "The Skyline," *The New Yorker*, Nov. 12, 1949, pp. 73 ff.

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THE ARCHITECTURE OF THOMASTON, MAINE

Circumstances have contrived to preserve Thomaston much as it was a century ago. Though the town is still prosperous enough, the greater part of its business went long ago to what was formerly East Thomaston, now the separate city of Rockland, leaving the parent village to decline quietly in an atmosphere of static gentility. For Thomaston's great days were seafaring ones; a century ago its population, four times greater than it is today, was occupied largely with shipping and the making of ships. Now all that remains of these activities are some decaying wharves and rigging lofts, and a few small boats being constructed on the ways where great ships were formerly made.

Thomaston is more impressively laid out and better situated than most other coast towns. Its elm-shaded main street extends for nearly two miles, and in its midst is situated a beautifully planted mall, an unusual early example of town planning. From this main street, which is on a ridge, the town slopes down the hillside to the harbor where the Georges River turns from a fresh stream into a tidal estuary. Though the explorer Weymouth in 1603 laid claim to the region around what is now Thomaston, in the name of James I, and it was here that the first soil in North America was cultivated by Englishmen (four years before Jamestown and eighteen years before the founding of Plymouth), there was no extensive building until the prosperous shipping days of the nineteenth century.

The present site of the town has been lived in by white men since 1630, but their dwellings until the middle of the next century were mostly within the precincts of Fort St. George, for no exposed building lasted long in the troubled period of the Indian Wars. These dwellings and a few which followed in the little clearings around the fort and at the head of tide were log cabins, and not until the coming of General Knox in 1793 were there more than a few framed dwellings. Cyrus Eaton, the historian of the town, describes Thomaston then as "still a woody region interspersed with straggling clearings, dotted here and there with small, low, unpainted houses,

many of them of logs and some few of hewn timber, distant from each other, along half-made or newly laid out highways scarcely fit for wheel vehicles of any kind."¹

The first framed house was put up in 1762,² but the building has apparently disappeared, for the house which is generally considered to be the oldest now standing in town, the old Edgerton place, is supposed to have been built in 1783.³ Little of the original building remains to suggest antiquity to the casual observer. The Tilson and Fales houses on the old Meadows Road to Rockland, although somewhat changed, preserve more of the charm of the old central chimney story-and-a-half house. These and the Catland house on Main Street present the most lively evocation of the houses of the early settlers, with their niceness of line and simplicity of plan and construction, like the similar houses built early in the eighteenth century at York (as the Eastman house) and elsewhere.

THE ADAMESQUE

Before 1793 there appear to have been only two dwellings of two stories, the Peleg Wadsworth house,⁴ built around Moses Wheaton's log cabin,⁵ and the "old Young place."⁶ But in that year there was finished in Thomaston at the cost of fifty thousand dollars, after a year's work, a mansion whose magnificence exceeded anything known in that section of the country. At the time it was said "to be unequalled in any part of the commonwealth." (It will be recalled that Maine was a part of Massachusetts until 1820.) Mr. Eaton indeed goes on to call it a "palace," and says that French visitors delighted to term it a "chateau." Even though the original structure has disappeared, no description of Thomaston could be complete without reference to this building, "Montpelier" (Fig. 1), the home of General Knox. The former Secretary of War had become the proprietor of a huge domain, acquired mainly through his wife's inheritance of the Waldo Patent of the Eastern Lands, originally a grant by James I of the territory between the Muscongus and Penobscot rivers. The house has been discussed elsewhere, and no detailed description is therefore necessary.⁷

It might be mentioned, however, that no pains were spared in its construction, for the general even brought over a carpenter from France for the sole purpose of making the window sashes. The house stood in the midst of gardens, orchards and avenues entered through a great gate surmounted by a carved golden eagle. The central house was augmented at the rear by two wings with nine buildings in each. Only one of them, the cook-house, built of brick, remains as a reminder of former grandeur, now serving as the town's little railroad station.⁸

Naturally there came to Thomaston with Knox many retainers and associates for whom dwellings had to be made. Among them were builders and craftsmen. The builder of "Montpelier," Ebenezer Dunton,⁹ is supposed to have put up a few buildings, but none can now be identified. Another builder who accompanied Knox, Howland Rogers of Marshfield, Massachusetts, is known to have built at least one dwelling, the three-storied Humphries house (now destroyed),¹⁰ more pretentious than most, for the three-story dwelling had not previously come as far east as Thomaston.¹¹

There are two other houses associated with Knox which were put up about the turn of the century. One, the present Oxnard house on Main Street (always said to have been built for one of Knox's employees¹²), is hip-roofed, with central hall and four rooms on each floor, remodelled in the style of the Greek Revival. The present Hahn house, built in 1805 by Knox for his blacksmith, Rowland Jacobs, is more refined in structure and detail. The curved stair and Adamesque detail of the mantels suggest the work of a trained man like Rogers, if not indeed Dunton himself. Another fine building notable for its size and its interior and exterior detail (some of which has been removed), though not built for one of Knox's men, is the John Paine house, generally believed to have been built before the turn of the century.¹³

The buildings of the decade of the 1820's in Thomaston are the most conspicuous and immediately appealing. With the fine proportions and delicate detail of the Adam style, they are scattered liberally all over the town, especially along the extended main street which is U. S. Route 1. All of them are dwellings, story-and-a-half or two-storied, with the exception of the two churches, one of which has been removed. For the purposes of discussion, these houses can be divided into three groups: those definitely by the architect William R. Keith, those designed by other men, and finally those less distinguished than the others and by anonymous builders. It will be profitable to discuss fully only the first group.

Three houses are known definitely to be by Keith—the Robinson, Burgess, and his own, now belonging to Dr. Dennison. William R. Keith was born at Thomaston in 1799,¹⁴ the son of Josiah Keith, tanner and shoemaker,

and the sixth in descent from the Reverend James Keith, a Scotchman who came to America in 1662. Mr. Keith was a successful merchant and builder and owner of a limekiln on Erin Street. He perhaps got his start in business by draining and selling the swampy land around his father's old tannery. His wife Anne had a local reputation as a person of culture, being a versifier of note, the producer of very painstaking charades, and the founder of the Woman's Library. Mr. Keith must also have been a cultivated person if his taste in building is a criterion. Furthermore he was interested in his town and in his fellow citizens, for it was due principally to his efforts, abetted by those of his wife, that the part of Main Street near his father's property was also drained, the adjacent mall set off, and the whole length of Main Street planted. Upon his death in the 1870's, a widower and childless, he left a substantial amount of money to the town for the support of indigent widows and fatherless children, a sum which is still used.

Keith's outstanding work is the house built for another but soon owned by the Hon. Edward Robinson, a prosperous shipmaster, merchant, state senator, and candidate for governor (Fig. 2).¹⁵ The arrangement of the house is original as well as convenient. The main part of the building, and that which the passing observer notices, seems to be simply a rectangular hip-roofed house with two end chimneys. What the observer does not see is that this part of the house is very narrow, the much larger remaining area being contained in an ell. This plan gives opportunity for the living room to be open on three sides and for the hall to extend to a long window at the rear of the house without the usual darkness and length. Passage through the front part of the house, both upstairs and downstairs, to the ell (with its dining room, study, bedrooms, and service quarters) is avoided by the addition of a supplementary front entrance at the end of a handsomely colonnaded side porch which leads to a side stairway. This side porch may be the beginning of a tradition which continues in the Greek and Italianate styles in Thomaston, as will be seen. The ground slopes down from the street, making it possible for the kitchen and pantry to be in the basement at the back where the house is three-storied instead of two. The barn is attached to the house at the main floor by a bridge, making possible a passageway beneath it from the service quarters.

Though the plan is ingenious, it is in the proportions and detail that the real talent of Keith is shown. As is common with more pretentious houses (such as "Montpelier"), the façade is sheathed, not clapboarded, thus presenting a smooth surface. The remainder of the exterior walls are shingled. The elegant grace of proportion in the attenuated Adam manner can be observed in the photograph of the façade. The placing of the windows,

their relationship to each other and to the central doorway, the width and height of the side porch in relation to the rest of the house, combine to make an effect which is more than usually pleasing. The same can be said of the interior proportions, where the rooms and their openings are arranged in a notably satisfying way. The front entrance is the most ornamental part of the house, but this too is relatively simple with the usual fan light and side lights and with a plain cornice rather than a pediment, a practice almost universal in Thomaston. The pilasters are the most elaborate part of the design and have a pronounced but well-handled entasis, which does not occur in the fireplace or mantel designs.

Needless to say, the Robinson house hasn't the detailed carving or the pretentious dimensions of the great houses by Codd in Damariscotta and Wiscasset. Nor can it be compared with the mansions of Alexander Parris in Portland or other great Adam houses. But as an example of the less pretentious middle-class house, it has unusual charm in its refined proportions and in the suitability of its decoration. It could be taken as a norm of the house designed by the cultured amateur of the American Adam style, and yet it is not unoriginal. No set plan by Benjamin or anyone else was used by Keith in his arrangement of the Robinson house. Actually the only ornamental detail which can be traced to a definite source is the scroll bracket in the cornice taken from Benjamin's *American Builder's Companion*.

Keith's other houses are less distinctive, though still fine. The Burgess-Wolf house¹⁶ is as nicely proportioned as the Robinson house and with as fine and prominent a central doorway. Here Keith uses a rope moulding illustrated in Asher Benjamin's *American Builder's Companion*. Its plan, however, is the more conventional rectangular one, with a definitely subordinate ell. The third house, definitely by Keith, the one he built for himself, is much later, in the style of the Greek Revival, and will be mentioned further on.

There are several other dwellings in the Adam manner which have nearly the same distinction as the Robinson and Burgess houses. It is tempting to consider the possibility that they were designed by Keith, especially in view of Eaton's statement commending him for "the many convenient and truly tasteful dwelling houses built for himself and others." None of them, however, has as interesting a plan as does the Robinson house, although several have as fine detail. It will suffice to list these houses in a note,¹⁷ with the exception of the Deacon Barnard house, which possesses perhaps the most beautiful doorway in town. It is almost identical to the entrance of the Joseph Wilson house in Newburyport (1800), and was doubtless carved by its owner and builder, who was a ship's carpenter.¹⁸ Deacon Barnard was earlier a shipwright in Newburyport,¹⁹ so the likelihood of his

authorship is practically certain.

There was one other builder in the Adamesque style besides Keith who can be identified, Paul Bradford, a descendant of the first governor of Plymouth Colony.²⁰ Competently designed, his houses are all of the story-and-a-half type with a central chimney.²¹ They are not particularly outstanding, however, and perhaps their only interest lies in the fact that they are the work of a man who was professionally a shipwright.

Before turning to the Greek Revival, one conspicuous house, probably by an amateur designer, should be mentioned because of its unusual façade, an excellent example of vernacular architecture as distinguished from the academic. The Ruggles house (Fig. 3), one of the most impressive in size and refinement of detail, is said by a descendant who lives in it to have been designed and built in 1827 by her grandfather, Judge John Ruggles, lawyer and prominent citizen. He was one of the favored few in town who went to play whist with the Widow Knox, whose tastes in society were so exalted that she had never entered the house of anyone in Thomaston, always sending her coachman on any errand while she remained in her carriage. The house is gabled, with four chimneys, and of conventional plan, a central hall and four large rooms on each floor. A capacious ell joins the house to the barn (a common practice due to the severity of the winters), which itself is nicely finished, the openings being decorated with pilasters and covered by blind keystoned arches. Formerly the land contained a small one-story building which was Mr. Ruggles' law office. It is a large house and unusual pains were taken with its detail. The mantels, some of Thomaston granite, are as pretentious as any in town. The interior doorways on the ground floor are as elegantly proportioned and refined in their many-moulded detail as those by Alexander Parris in Portland, and finer than anything in Thomaston. But the front entrance and the second-story window above it comprise the most interesting feature of the house. This combination makes an impressive unit, though an examination of the proportions and some of the detail reveals a less than professional hand. Much of the ornamental detail is naive. The prominent medallions in the entablature, though common to Adam design, are too large and are incised rather than raised. Actually it can be said in extenuation of this unconventional treatment that the incised design is more appropriate to wood and wood-cutting tools, especially since the Adam designs were often conceived to be executed in stucco relief. Similar in effect and in appropriateness to medium and tool are the dots and dashes taking the place of the middle fluting in the pilasters, and the diamond shaped pattern in the door and window. The former is a common enough American adaptation in wood of Adam detail, but not usually employed in so unconventional a place. All



FIG. 1. Montpelier, 1793. (*Maine Development Commission.*)

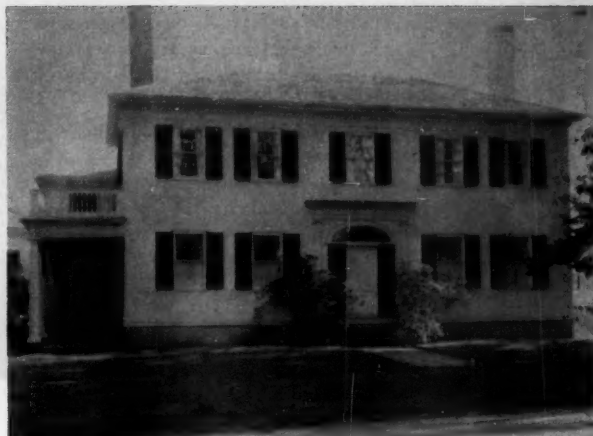


FIG. 2. Robinson House, William R. Keith. (*Photo Author.*)

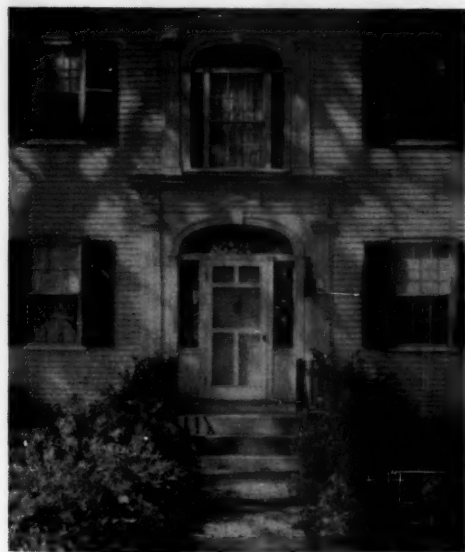


FIG. 3. Ruggles House, 1827. (*Maine Development Commission.*)



FIG. 4. Academy and Congregational Church, James Rivers *del.*, Thomaston Map of 1855.

this indicates that Mr. Ruggles hadn't the professional taste of such a designer as Keith. Yet, if the detail is judged not by academic standards but as that appropriate to execution in wood, it exemplifies a more original conception than the conventionally correct, and at the same time has a local flavor.

Before concluding the discussion of the Adam period in Thomaston, mention should be made of two early churches, one considerably remodelled, the other long since torn down. The first is the present Baptist Church, erected in 1796²² as the town, or Congregational meeting house. Very little of the original detail of the building is

left, it having been remodelled at various times, most thoroughly in 1848, but the building as a whole still presents the appearance of a simple, almost box-like structure.

The church which has disappeared was that erected for the Congregationalists in 1826, designed and built by the joiner Benjamin S. Dean.²³ Surviving representations of this Adam building show a conventional enough structure with none of the distinction of his later Greek Revival style in Bangor, but revealing a sense of nice proportion at least.

The destruction of this church and of the little Greek Revival academy adjacent to it, as represented in the



FIG 5. Riggers' Houses. (Photo Author.)

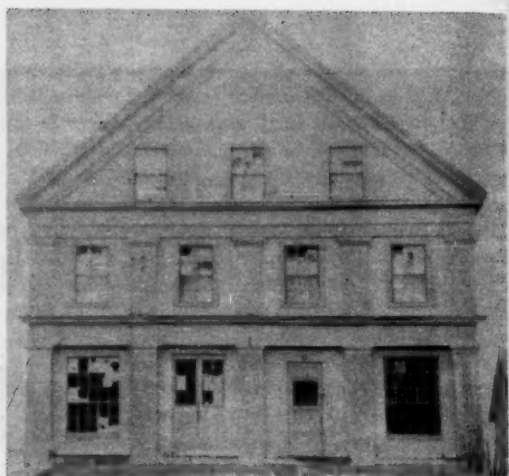


FIG. 6. Store, South Thomaston. (Photo Author.)

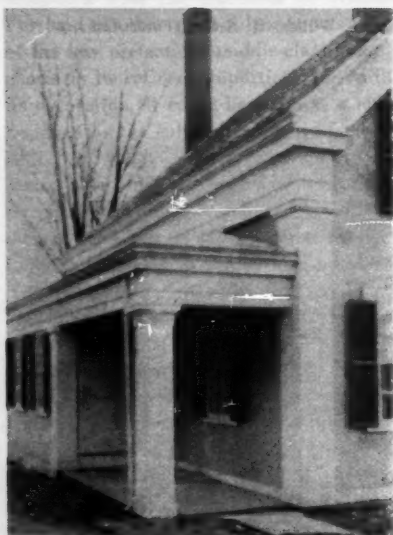


FIG. 7.
Morton-Lermond House,
Albert Morton, 1847.
(Photo Author.)

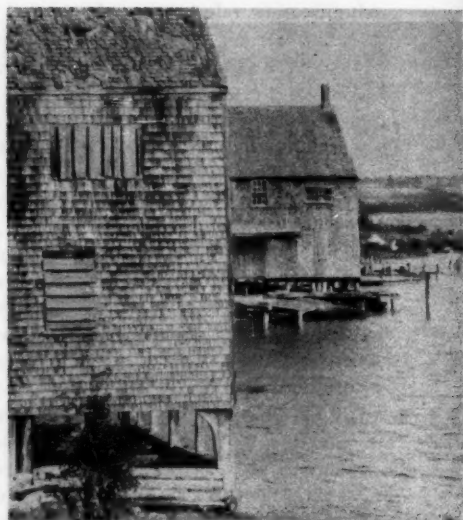


FIG. 8.
Dunn and Eliot
Rigging Lofts.
(J. C. Smith.)



FIG. 9. Ranlett House, 1848. (Photo Author.)

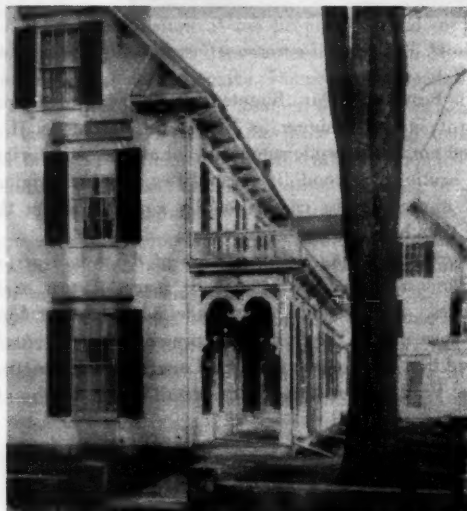


FIG. 10. Overlock House. (Photo Author.)

Rivers drawing of 1855 (Fig. 4), comprises the greatest single change differentiating the old from the present Thomaston. The Catholic church and the high school now on the same site, although respectable modern buildings, do not fit in with the otherwise consistently preserved town. The old drawing has further interest because it shows the stage of growth of the trees planted by Mr. Keith and his associates. They are still young and spindly, not yet the magnificent specimens of today shading the whole town and contributing much to its air of settled antiquity. The earlier town must have seemed lonely and remote, unshielded by the civilized foliage of shade trees from the fogs and gales of the northern sea and from the bleak surrounding country, covered with hemlock.

THE GREEK

About 1825 the heavier forms of Greek Revival began to take the place of the graceful Adam-derived style of the Early Republic, and by the 1840's it was flourishing in Thomaston, both in its academic and vernacular aspects. The latter is more interesting than the former, which deserves little more than passing mention. Only one significant building of the academic group survives, the house Keith designed for himself, deriving largely from the "Doric Cottage" in Edward Shaw's *Rural Architecture* (Boston, 1843). But it must be admitted that no matter how derivative the detail, the plan is as asymmetrical and ingenious as that of Keith's Robinson house. Although there are several other correct and impressive houses, more interesting is a group of smaller dwellings, simpler but no less Greek, which are grouped around the water-front section (Fig. 5). These were the homes of the "industrious mechanics" of those days, the ship's carpenters and sailmakers, the riggers and caulkers. Consequently, they do not display the elegance of form appropriate to Main Street, their detail consisting merely of very plain pilasters and entablatures. These houses, uniform in their simple construction and classically derived detail, are like hundreds in towns and on farms throughout the eastern part of the country. Unoriginal but neat and foursquare, they gave an underlying consistency to the scene of the '40's and '50's.

The vernacular style in its masonry aspect has been pointed out by Hamlin and Giedion, and the granite warehouses of Boston and other coast cities are sufficiently familiar. But the wooden counterparts of these buildings have been relatively neglected. Thomaston is an excellent place in which to study this aspect of the style, because it contributes a local quality of its own. It appears in its simplest form in store buildings, such as those on Main Street, east of the later brick blocks. A typical example is a store in neighboring South Thomaston (Fig. 6). The various parts are reduced to the forms most easily executed in wood. The entablature

is reduced to one plank; the lines of the pilaster, entablature and raking cornice, though ostensibly Greek Revival, appear exaggerated to emphasize the simple wooden form of the box-like building with its pitched roof. The pilasters and entablature are deliberately wide and give a larger smooth-plane surface to relate with the similarly smooth plane surfaces of the walls, which are sheathed rather than clapboarded. The same attention to relationships seen in this play of surfaces is also noticed in the nicety of proportion in the door and show windows. Even the relative sizes of sashes, frames and mullions seem studied. Another quality is a certain monumentality (even in such an unpretentious building as this) derived from the exaggerated heaviness and broad, plain surfaces of the manipulated Greek detail, and from a continuation of the tradition of the simple box-like form of the early meeting house and the ubiquitous barn.²⁴

The houses of the vernacular style in Thomaston are more complex and naturally more impressive than the stores. They are especially interesting to the historian of architecture because they can be attributed to definite builders, according to local tradition—in this case, the word of descendants of builders and owners. Three of these are key houses for the understanding of the style: the Albert Morton-Charles Lermond house on Green Street (built in 1847), the Captain Alfred Watts house on Eliot Street (built in 1848), both by Albert Morton,²⁵ and the George K. Washburn house on Knox Street, built in 1848 by James Overlock.²⁶ Omitting consideration of the plans, which are conventional, we shall concentrate on the proportions and detail of the houses—that is, the aesthetic effect of their design. The Morton-Lermond house (Fig. 7), the earliest in date, is the first to show the heavy and simple design of the orders characteristic of them all (though somewhat varied in each case). Inspired by the Doric pilaster order in Benjamin's *Practice of Architecture*, Morton exhibits an even greater directness of handling in wood than Benjamin himself recommends in his preface. This simplicity is combined with a certain variety of surface, as for instance the great contrast in size between the parts of the entablature, which results in a far bolder effect of light and shade than is usual. The greater size of the decoration in relation to the rest of the house is also unusual, increasing the boldness of the design. The use of sheathing instead of the more usual clapboards makes possible the effect of various broad planes in relation to the uninterrupted wall surface itself and the wide smooth forms of the pilasters and entablatures. The interior decoration is as bold and broad, and gives a rather heavy effect to its wide cornices and mouldings.

Less pretentious is the Watts house of the following year. Here Morton is more restrained in his detail and

consequently arrives at a more stripped simplicity where contrasts of ornamental form are not so prominent, more scope thereby being given for the play of relationships of the plain surfaces.

The Washburn house of the same year by Overlock²⁷ is perhaps the most impressive of the group. Much larger in scale, it could almost be described as a mansion. The larger proportions make possible an even more effective exploitation than in the other two houses of smooth surfaces of wall in relation to pilasters. The order itself is stripped almost to nothing except for the upright planks of the pilasters. The entablature cornice consists of a series of magnificent broad and heavy receding strips parallel to the eave. The interior is as imposing as the exterior. The high ceilings give ample wall space to serve as background for the elegant joinery and the marble fireplaces. The cornices are heavy and plain, as are the simple but large rectangular pieces of marble forming the mantels. But the window enframements are most elaborate, not so much in their actual detail as in their extent. A heavy entablature, consisting only of a wide architrave and a many-moulded cornice supported by uncapped pilaster strips, forms an area which consists not only of the window but a large surface of plain wood to each side. This gives an air of ample magnificence all the more effective because of the simplicity of its broad surfaces.

These three houses, attributed to two builders, are the best examples, if not the prototypes, for many less pretentious houses in the town. They share a common bigness of conception in design and smooth elegance of joinery which could be described as being "ship-shape." This quality, noticed in other coast towns, is of course the key to the style of these houses—they were built by men who, besides being carpenters, were also shipbuilders. Albert Morton was the son of one,²⁸ the brother of another, and was himself a shipbuilder in company with his brother-in-law, Charles Lermond, and L. B. Gilchrist. James Overlock, though principally a housewright and joiner, also worked on ships, being associated with Washburn Brothers, and was part owner of one, the brig "Rowland," built in 1844. Both Charles Waterman (whose birth date is unknown) and his brother, Samuel (born in 1824), were shipbuilders and carpenters. It will be recalled that Paul Bradford, already mentioned, was also a house and shipbuilder; and there was another, Stephen Starret, whose work, however, is known only in the Italianate houses beginning to be built at this time. The presence of these six men in the same town and all working at the same time is impressive evidence of the possible influence of shipbuilding upon architecture.

The question arises how much of the particular quality of these buildings can be attributed to this in-

fluence. Doubtless some structural devices used in shipbuilding were employed in these houses, because in buildings where the supports are exposed, as in the old rigging lofts of Dunn and Eliot (Fig. 8), the "knee" construction used in the interior of ships can actually be seen. But whether this is so or not is of no great moment. There are only so many ways of putting up the frame of a house or of a boat, and there was a tradition in both trades and plenty of carpentry books to learn from. In any case, such construction, if it were used, would not have the historical importance of the balloon frames or of early iron construction. What is more important here is the aesthetic effect of the finished building—that is, its formal quality—the result of the design, the materials used, and the execution. And it is certainly quite possible that these Thomaston houses by carpenter-shipbuilders repeat the broad sweeping shapes and the functional structure of ships in their simple and big forms and in their functional use of the material. These houses in their turning away from the strictly imitative forms of the Greek Revival have some of the architectural rationalism missed so at the time by Horatio Greenough, who could never understand the reason for Greek temples in New England. Perhaps he would have liked these Thomaston houses which reflect a little the quality of the sailing ship which Emerson said was the finest American architecture.²⁹

Occasionally the academic and vernacular Greek Revival were combined in Thomaston, most notably in the Ranlett and Henderson houses, adjacent to each other and comprising together a very handsome pair at the head of the Mall. They combine the balanced formality and elegance of relatively correct classical detail with the simplicity and broad form of the more vernacular houses just discussed. The Ranlett house (Fig. 9) was built in 1848,³⁰ and the great similarity between it and the other would suggest that the latter was built at about the same time. Further, both houses are connected with the family of Captain Oliver Jordan, merchant, shipbuilder, and shipmaster, for they were the homes of two of his daughters, Anna Maria, who married Captain Charles Ranlett, and Susan Amelia, who married Captain William Henderson. It is interesting to note that two other daughters of Captain Jordan married into the shipbuilding family of Gilchrists. This family connection suggests the possibility that Albert Morton, who was part of the firm of Gilchrist and Lermond,³¹ might have had something to do with the design of these houses, though they bear a greater resemblance in plan and general bigness of conception to the Washburn house by Overlock. In any case, the house shows the characteristics of the style of both these men, but it is combined with a more cultivated

taste for classical detail. Both houses are about the same size and have the same general plan, marked by a long living room across the front of the house divided by a pair of free-standing columns. Like the Washburn house, both have their gable ends facing the street, and a colonnaded porch leading to an entrance on the side which still faces front, an arrangement which continues with houses of the Italianate style built by Morton and Overlock. Also like the Washburn house is the treatment of the walls, which are very carefully sheathed. The broad areas of the pilaster strips relate even more nicely to the wide smooth surfaces of the walls than is the case at the Washburn house. The pediments are heavy and simple in form, again like the Washburn house, but more respect for the actual form of the classical Doric cornice is observed, and the Ionic order of the porch colonnade is beautifully proportioned and finely executed.

The Ranlett house has perhaps the finest drawing-room in the State of Maine. Divided in the center by free-standing Corinthian columns, it bears a striking resemblance to the drawing-rooms in some of the New York houses of the period, such as that of the old Forrest house on Washington Square or the old Stevens "palace" by Andrew Jackson Davis on Murray Street.

The exceptional quality of this house arouses all the more curiosity about its architect. There is considerable possibility that Captain Ranlett himself had much to do with it, for in his reminiscences (published in 1942 as *Master Mariner of Maine*) he says: "During the building of this ship (the 'Ionian') I was also engaged in planning and building the house on Main Street in Thomaston which was to be my home for the next sixteen years."

THE ITALIANATE

Before concluding the discussion of Thomaston, mention should be made of another style, that of the Italian Villa. Most of the examples in Thomaston are of the conventional symmetrical central plan and are relatively restrained in detail, being similar in plan and appearance to the Italian Villa in Shaw's *Rural Architecture* of 1843, even to the ornate baroque shape of

the fireplaces. The Robert Walsh house, built in 1848 by Morton,³² and the second Warren Jacobs house, built in 1825 but remodelled by Stephen Starret, Charles Waterman and Paul Bradford (all shipbuilders),³³ are typical examples of this style.

The other notable houses of this period are all by Overlock³⁴ and are generally similar to one another in design and plan. These are the John White and Jonathan Strong houses, and the one he built for himself (Fig. 10). On the basis of almost exact similarity to these, the John Creighton house and two identical houses on upper Knox Street can also be ascribed to him. The plan of these houses is the same as that one so popular in Thomaston, seen in the contemporary houses of the Greek Revival, the Ranlett, Henderson, and his own Washburn house. The chief characteristics of the design of these houses is the use on his porches of great brackets in the form of volutes. These have a boldness and sweep which is rather attractive in itself, and especially so when compared with the more usual fussy cornices and brackets of the style. These Italianate houses add a certain vivacious seasoning to the classical perfection of the town. At the same time, they do not exceed the bounds of taste, a common failing elsewhere, being restrained, perhaps, by the functional training of their designer-builders who were also shipbuilders, and by the conspicuousness of neo-classicism. The usual towers, wings, asymmetry and flexible planning of the style seen elsewhere are completely lacking in Thomaston.

Thomaston is generally appealing because of the beauty of its individual buildings, set in a framework of old lawns and trees. There are very few of the anachronisms of nearby later buildings found in other towns. Furthermore, Thomaston is one of the earliest and most conspicuous examples of town planning as seen in the mall and its extensive planting. To students of American architecture and culture, the town is particularly interesting because its buildings show the interrelation between shipbuilder and housewright, and because there flourished here to an unusual degree that almost native style, the American Greek Revival.

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

1. Cyrus Eaton, *History of Thomaston, Rockland and South Thomaston, Maine* (Hallowell, 1865). Mr. Eaton, a corresponding member of the Massachusetts Historical Society, in this volume wrote one of the most thorough of the town histories published in Maine during the nineteenth century.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

3. According to Mrs. Richard Eliot of Thomaston. Mrs. Eliot is generally conceded by the amateur genealogists and historians of the town to be the best authority on local history. I am indebted to her, Miss Mary McPhail and others for much information.

4. Unfortunately demolished several years ago. From a representation of it by the Thomaston artist, James Rivers, appearing

on the lithographed map of the town published by E. M. Woodford in 1855, it appears to have been a large house with two central chimneys and two façade entrances. The detail is pre-Adam, the eaves are flush to the walls, and the windows are heavily enframed and corniced.

5. Eaton, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

6. Of uncertain date, but its detail and general appearance is similar to drawing of the Wadsworth house.

7. Fiske Kimball, *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and the Early Republic* (New York, 1922), p. 165 and pp. 297-8. Here the house is attributed to Bulfinch on basis of style. The house has been carefully reproduced by the D. A. R. from the evidence of written descriptions and recollections of

those who remembered the original building before it was destroyed in 1871.

8. At one time one hundred and three servants were employed by the household alone, and fifteen thousand pounds of beef were consumed in a single year. A schooner plying between Thomaston and Philadelphia kept the general's table and wine cellars supplied, his house furnished, and his ladies dressed in the latest French fashions. With such a scale of living, it is not to be wondered at that only forty years later, Hawthorne describes the place as "a large rusty looking edifice of wood . . . a ruinous mansion." (Randall Steward, *The American Notebooks of Nathaniel Hawthorne* [New Haven, 1932], p. 22.)

9. Eaton, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

11. In fact, this must have been the first erected in the state subsequent to the Pownalborough Courthouse in what is now Dresden, built in 1760. (Charles Edwin Allen, *History of Dresden, Maine*, p. 24.)

12. Mrs. Eliot, Miss McPhail and others.

13. In August, 1906, John Prince at the age of eighty-eight wrote in the *Thomaston Register* his recollections of the town as it appeared in 1820. Many of the houses he mentioned have disappeared, and a few have been so remodelled that they are practically new buildings. (These are the first Edward Robinson [now Overlock], the Sullivan Dwight, Stackpole [later Congressman Jonathan Gilley] and Hezekiah Prince houses, all of which were extensively remodelled in the Greek Revival style.) Of those houses in Prince's list only five which still exist have not been mentioned in this paper. Two are later examples of the hipped roof, two-chimneyed type built with two rooms on each side of a central hall, deriving ultimately from the McCobb house built in Phippsburg in 1774, the probable prototype for all such houses east of the Kennebec (the date is that given by the present owners, the Minotts, who have lived in the house for over a hundred years, their forebears having purchased it from the McCobb); the house on Main Street built in 1803 for Dr. Jacob French (Eaton, *op. cit.*), a physician from Andover, Massachusetts, and the second, the Washington Robbins house, built at an unknown date but generally considered to be one of the oldest in the town. These houses have little Adam detail, but two others, of the same type and plan, do: the Mason Wheatland and the Colonel Halsey Healey houses (according to Mrs. Eliot). The remaining building on Prince's list is the most interesting of the group, the old Tavern (Eaton, *op. cit.*), unusual in being a large building with an attic room, which must have been a kind of assembly or ballroom, covering the whole top of the house. The entrance is at the gable end, and there are four large rooms in the front on either side of the long central hall. The house has been considerably remodelled in its various metamorphoses, and little remains of its former grandeur except two very fine mantels of Thomaston granite, the shelves supported by free-standing columns, and a very beautifully carved pedimented fan-lighted entrance (in July, 1951, the building was empty and fast going to ruin, but the doorway and mantels could still be salvaged).

14. Information concerning Keith and his wife was obtained from Eaton, from the Rivers map of 1855, from Mrs. Eliot and Mrs. William R. Tobey (aged 90 in 1948).

15. According to Associate Professor of Philosophy, Edward S. Robinson, University of Kansas, and others.

16. According to the present generation of Burgess descendants and others, Keith is the designer.

17. Perhaps the most interesting of these is the house built by Rufus Copeland Counce in 1822 (according to family tradition), later the home of Rufus Harvey Counce, the figurehead carver. The exterior entrance is almost as elaborate as that of the Robinson house, employing a rope moulding similar to that used on

the Burgess entrance. A wooden mantel on the second floor is unusually graceful and is more elaborate than most in Thomaston, having a complex and many-moulded cornice supported by four greatly attenuated engaged columns. All the details are beautifully cut and nicely related to one another. Rufus C. Counce was a master shipbuilder and the foreman at Halsey Healey's shipyard. It is quite possible that Counce himself could have designed and built his own house, with the aid of a carpenter book, the presence in town of Keith to give advice, and his own skill in building.

Perhaps the most graceful elliptical stairway in town is that of the Waldo house (still lived in by descendants of the owner).

Another detail worth noting is the barn of the old O'Brien place; still displaying one of the most elegantly decorative blind arches to be seen anywhere, quite the equal of any such ornament on utilitarian buildings in McIntire's Salem.

Another house of even greater beauty of proportion and refinement of detail is the former Dunn Henderson, now Aaron Clarke, house. It is a story-and-a-half building, but with two chimneys on the side instead of a central one, differentiating it from the early cottage type with central chimney. It is very unusual in plan, for the stairway, a gracefully curved one, is in the back of the house, an arrangement which results in a small stairless entrance hall. The fan-lighted doorway and the interior detail are especially fine, the wooden fireplaces being the most elaborate in town with their many mouldings and engaged colonnettes. The barn of the Henderson-Clarke house is as nicely finished as the exterior of the house itself. Both structures were apparently recognized by the builder as parts of the same complex, whereas the usual treatment of the barn is an afterthought, even though it is usually joined to the dwelling itself.

18. Eaton, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Barnard Genealogy.

19. John Mead Howells, *The Architectural Heritage of the Piscataqua* (New York, 1941), p. 76.

20. Eaton, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Bradford Genealogy.

21. Two are definitely described by descendants of the builders as being by Bradford: his own house and the Leeds-Crawford house. A third house, the former Warren Jacobs', may be by Bradford for reasons of similarity to the other two, and because of family connections, Bradford having been a brother-in-law of Jacobs. (Eaton, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Jacobs Genealogy.)

22. Eaton, *op. cit.*

23. Eaton, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Deane Genealogy. Deane later went to Bangor where he became the most prominent architect in eastern Maine. His work is important and original (see Samuel M. Green, "Thomas Lord, Joiner and Housewright," *Magazine of Art*, Vol. 40, pp. 230-235).

24. I am grateful to Walter Creese for this latter observation.

25. Names and dates from family records in possession of Mrs. Elizabeth Tobey Lermond.

26. According to Mrs. Robert Walsh, a descendant of the builder, and present owner of the home.

27. According to Mrs. Walsh, who was a Washburn, and according to James Overlock, the builder's grandson.

28. This and the following information in the paragraph is derived from Eaton, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Morton and Eaton Genealogies, and Table IX, "Vessels built in Thomaston." Morton was born in 1820, Overlock in 1813, and Starret in 1815.

29. F. O. Mattheissen, *The American Renaissance* (New York, 1941), pp. 194 and 152.

30. According to the former owner, Mr. Albert Gould of Boston, and the builder's grandson, L. Felix Ranlett of Bangor.

31. Eaton, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Jordan Genealogy.

32. According to Mrs. Elizabeth Lermond and Mrs. Robert Walsh.

33. According to Mrs. William R. Tobey's family records.

34. According to James Overlock.

AMERICAN NOTES

CHARLES E. PETERSON, *Editor*

Old Custom House, 420 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia

TRAINING ARCHITECTS

At the annual meeting of the National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings last year there was an open session during which questions came from the floor. One of the most popular queries was "where can we get advice on how to restore our old building?"

This is a really tough question. Such work should be done by a profession which can hardly be said to exist. Some individuals by expending extraordinary amounts of time and effort have come to grasp some of the principles involved and formulate rules of thumb to be followed. But there has been little pyramiding of shared knowledge and criteria have hardly been established.

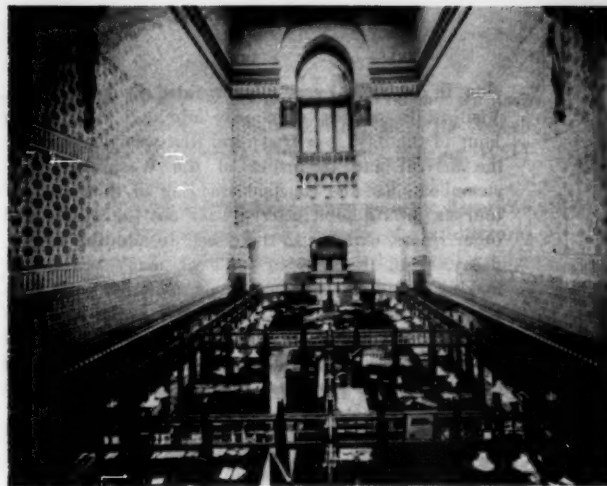
It appears to the Editor that a work in two separate spheres is necessary: documentary sources (little has been printed) and structural evidence. Historians who are used to working with documents seldom understand buildings and are almost never draftsmen. It is practically impossible to analyze most structures without projections of them on paper; there is no way of getting acquainted with any particular fabric like preparing a measured drawing of it. On the other hand, few architects seem to have the patience for locating and analyzing documentary source material to explain physical evidence at the site. What they do learn during their work is seldom written down for the education of others.

No panacea is suggested at this writing, but the recent remarks of Nikolaus Pevsner of London in an article on the training of architects is interesting in this connection:

It is probably partly this closer interest in history which can explain the appearance in school programmes of a subject far too rare in England: training for preservation of monuments. In this country the study of past styles is still either regarded as guidance for future imitation or, in progressive schools—at least by the students—as an unavoidable nuisance or an acceptable entertainment wholly detached from the tasks of today. At Prague, Florence and Venice we find fifth year classes in restoration, at Amsterdam fourth and fifth year. At Stockholm the Academy has them, but not the Institute of Technology. (*The Architectural Review*, Vol. 107, No. 642 [June, 1950], 372.)

SURVEY OF OLD GERMANTOWN PLANNED

Leighton P. Stradley, President of the Germantown Historical Society, has announced receipt of a grant from an anonymous donor of \$15,000 with which to make a survey and publish a report on old Germantown. The set-



Continuing our series of "who dunits" is this spectacular tile-walled banking room of the 1870's. The building, which exists with some minor changes, will be identified, with its architect, in the next issue.

tlement was founded in 1683 by the followers of Francis Daniel Pastorius—a band of German Quakers and Menonites—and is noted for its fine stone houses. Politically, it is now a part of the City of Philadelphia.

Mr. Stradley, senior partner in a large Philadelphia law firm and member of SAH, has also a private project compiling a book on School House Lane, a cross-town thoroughfare in Germantown on which he lives.

GALLOPING CARPENTRY

John Stenhouse of Washington has written to enquire about the term "galloping joists" which he found in manuscript material of 1787 relating to a house near Annapolis. In the *Maryland Gazette* for July 30, 1752 the Corporation of the City of Annapolis called for undertakers to make proposals on a new market house to have "a Roof of Galloping Rafters with a small Turret for a Bell, in the middle of it." We have no idea what the term means. Can any of our readers help out?

HOW TO RESTORE MOUNT VERNON

Samuel Sloan (1815-1880) was a prolific architect, author and publisher of mid-Victorian Philadelphia. His *Architectural Review and Builders' Journal* is said to be the first periodical of its kind published in this country. In paging through one of the first numbers (August, 1868) we were amused to read the Editor's proposal for the preservation of General Washington's mansion:

When the writer visited Mount Vernon in the year 1856, the process of insufficient, trivial patching was painfully evident, all about the exterior of the man-

sion. In one sense, every pilgrim aided the dilapidation. Visitors, in masses, were only admitted at a certain hour of the day, it is true; and that was regulated by the arrival and departure of the Washington city steamboat. But the constant treading of thousands of tourists, would soon utterly wear out the piazza and other floors, exposed to their feet. In addition to this, decay, from the weather-stress of many years, was making rapid progress upon the outside work. The pillars of the piazza had rotted away at the base; the weather-boarding of the house was dropping off; and the balustrades of the balcony roof of the piazza, and of the entrance porch, at the southern flank of the mansion, were fast disappearing.

All this led us carelessly to remark to the captain of the steamboat, upon our return trip, that, however laudable in itself, if the process of patching Mount Vernon should continue many years, there would not be a solitary vestige of George Washington's Mount Vernon left; because a patch, even if the wood were raised upon the estate—which we did not suppose to be the case—could have no association with the original; and, in a very few years, the house would be all patches. But the worthy captain—perhaps inwardly startled at the thought of the loss of his vocation, or, at least, that of his successors, although he manifested no outward emotion—stoutly insisted, that, even if my supposition should, as an extreme case, fall true; and the entire residence should, in this detail patching, come to be composed of pieces of wood, none of which had ever been seen, or owned, by George Washington; yet, as long as the original form, color and general appearance were kept up, it would still be the original Mount Vernon!

Our idea of the true restoration of this wooden abode, fraught with such important patriotic associations to the whole people of a great land and all their descendants forever—is this:

Employ the best professional talent. Survey very accurately the present location and bearings of the mansion, and all the buildings and divisions, at Mount Vernon. Measure and locate all the points of the exterior. Survey, with reference to the exterior survey, and measure all the interior portions of the mansion. Provide a temporary fireproof building immediately at hand, for storage. Strip room by room, lettering and numbering every door and windowframe, mantel-piece, moulding, panel and board, as it comes away; and deposit the materials of each room, in a separate place, in the fire-proof repository, as above. Continue in the same manner, until the entire building is carefully torn apart, without splintering, lettered, numbered, packed away and properly secured. Then put a permanent guard upon the stowing premises.

In rebuilding, arrange so that the exact interior dimensions, position and relation of every room, hall, stairway, closet, window and door, shall be preserved. Make the foundations, throughout, deep and broad, and

build up the cellar walls of large, well-squared and durable stones. Erect the walls slowly and carefully of well-burnt and well-shaped bricks; and, as the wall rises, carry up its outer, white marble casing, with occasional marble cross-joints or dovetails,* to secure the adhesion of the marble casing to the brick wall. Then construct the piazza floor and steps, its pillars and its ceiling; the southerly entrance porch, and all its parts; the quadrant colonnades, and the story and a half offices on both sides of the mansion; all of white marble, to correspond. Let the roof be of white glazed tiles; and make the upper balustrades of well-galvanized iron. All the old interior parts would be inserted, piece by piece, in their respective places, as before; to be thenceforward carefully protected, as far as might be, from the influence of decay, by regularly recurring, thorough and careful applications of paint, varnish or oils, as the case should require. Then such of the authentic Washington movable relics, as might be attainable, should be deposited in the apartments of this glorious old home. The summer-houses and other detached bowers, shelters, lodges, gateways, &c., would be renovated in a similar manner, replacing the frailness of wood by the permanence of marble and of galvanized iron. Then the old paths and, drives, the gardens and the conservatories should be replaced, in appearance as they were of old, with more substantial materials for the different parts. Finally: the plants known to be favorites of Washington and his immediate family, should reappear, in the spots where the General himself had them planted, or standing; and the forest should be managed, so far as its nature would permit, upon the same principle.

The reader will mark, that the whole interior space of the dwelling would be as at first. That is, were the entire mansion to be dissolved into, and recrystallized from air, its every interior part would occupy precisely the same atmospheric space, with respect to the soil of the homestead of Mount Vernon.

The very points of space, moved through and breathed in, by the Father of His Country, would be occupied and traversed by the honoring visitors, who would also have the same floors beneath them and the same wood-work around them. The one difference would be, that to give the exact interior dimensions, would, from the nature of the new outer materials, render the exterior a little larger, though, at prospect distance, not perceptibly so, as the style and all the proportions would be accurately preserved.

Nevertheless, for all this, two hundred thousand dollars would be an entirely inadequate sum. A million and a half would be a much closer approximation. The American people, however, will cheerfully furnish the latter, or a much larger sum for this purpose, or any

* Known to architects and masons, as *perpent-stones*, *parping-ashlars*, *perpeyns*, *bonders*, *bond-stones*, or *thorough-stones*; the first term being applied to squared-stones, or ashlar; *bonders*, also, do not always reach through a wall, but merely across part of its thickness.

other great one, to keep them together. Woe to all factionists striving to rend them apart!

Such—and such alone—in our view—such, we hope, in the public view—would be a faithful, an enduring restoration, of the arch-patriot Washington's paternal hall and home.

• • •

We sent Superintendent Wall a transcript of the Sloan article, which he found highly amusing, noting that:

Sloan is in the same category as a distinguished contemporary landscape architect who would have turned the [Mount Vernon] Bowling Green into an out-of-door Westminster Abbey where the nation's illustrious dead were to be immortalized in marble and bronze. This same individual would have razed all of the outbuildings. Since these dependencies had housed menials he thought they were unworthy to be left in proximity to the Mansion itself. There was also a movement at this early period by one of our esteemed fraternal bodies to replace the Tomb with a more appropriate structure. Fortunately our first Regent had a sound vision of a restored Mount Vernon.

CHICAGO RESOLUTION

At the 1951 Chicago meeting of the American Institute of Architects a resolution was offered by eight members, all but one of whom are also SAH members. The text voted favorably on May 11, reads as follows:

WHEREAS, recent jeopardy to and disfigurement of certain historic American buildings of merit has recently occurred, arising from widespread and general ignorance of their cultural, architectural and historic value and

WHEREAS, such jeopardy, disfigurement and also destruction continues to threaten our architectural heritage, and

WHEREAS, the architectural profession is peculiarly fitted and in duty bound to meet this menacing situation, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of the American Institute of Architects initiate a nation-wide educational campaign through its Chapters, in order to protect our historic buildings, in advance of possible destruction and preserve them for posterity.

EARL H. REED

J. FRAZER SMITH

BUFORD L. PICKENS

DICK SUTTON

RICHARD KOCH

THOMAS C. VINT

TURPIN C. BANNISTER

ALBERT SIMONS

EDGAR I. WILLIAMS

The motion was sparked by Earl H. Reed, F. A. I. A., of Chicago. Mr. Reed, an active architect with long experience in historical work, was District Officer of Northern Illinois for the Historic American Buildings Survey. The work of that unit was of outstanding quality and a substantial part of the collection was published. Mr. Reed has been busy for years in the preservation of historic buildings and occasionally makes a contribution to the

writings on Middle Western subjects. The last we have seen is "Mazzuchelli, Priest and Architect in the American Wilderness," *Measure*, Vol. II, No. 2 (Spring, 1951) 241-253.

It is hoped that during 1952, when both the American Institute of Architects and the Society of Architectural Historians meet in New York City, that the two groups can become better acquainted.

NATIONAL TRUST LEASES WOODLAWN

The great brick mansion of the Lewises, backing up against Fort Belvoir and overlooking the fields of Mount Vernon, has been leased by the Woodlawn Public Foundation to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, according to a press release dated August 30. This is the first structure to be taken over by the Trust, which intends to restore it. Worth Bailey, SAH member whose antiquarian career began with the National Park Service at Jamestown Island, has been engaged to direct the work.

The last two generations of well-to-do owners maintained Woodlawn in considerable style after connecting the wings and modernizing the interiors for a large-scale household. It will be interesting to see the house returned to its original character as designed by William Thornton. The Trust promises that the building will be open to inspection during restoration.

S. A. H. NEWS

CRYSTAL PALACE EXHIBIT

The Smith College Museum of Art and Massachusetts Institute of Technology are currently sponsoring an exhibition, "The Crystal Palace: The Structure, Its Antecedents and Its Immediate Progeny," to commemorate the centenary of that great building. The 39-page catalogue contains an illuminating essay by Professor Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Director of the Smith College Museum, on "Paxton and the Crystal Palace." This is drawn from his forthcoming book, *Victorian Architecture in Britain, The Early Phase, 1835-1855*, which is due to appear during 1952. The show will be available for travel.

REPORT ON THE MEETING OF NOVEMBER 16, 1951, OF THE NEW YORK CHAPTER, S.A.H.

On Friday evening, November 16, the New York Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians held their first meeting of the season at the Institute of Fine Arts, 17 East 80th Street, New York City.

After a delightful buffet supper at the home of James G. Van Derpool, the speakers of the evening, officers of the Chapter, national President Peterson and Secretary Gilchrist, all adjourned to the Institute where two excellent talks were delivered to the membership.

Talbot Hamlin shared with us the result of his research on "Calvin Pollard—A Forgotten New York Architect." Through original drawings, excerpts from the Pollard diary and a reconstruction of the contents of Pollard's professional library, he restored to general knowledge the work of a highly interesting architect, working mainly in the second quarter of the 19th century.

Henry Reed, recently returned from his studies on the Continent, gave us a glimpse of the beauties of the Piazza San Marco, Venice, drawing parallels which illustrated the importance of its planning concept and the influence it has had upon contemporary theory and practice.

Dr. Zucker and Clay Lancaster, the outgoing officers, were present and one can surely say that the New York Chapter owes much of its early existence and its firm consolidation to their efforts. Incoming President Van Derpool offered them a well-deserved vote of thanks for their splendid services to S.A.H.

Alan Burnham, Secretary-Treasurer

SECRETARY'S REPORT ON QUESTIONNAIRE ON BACK OF 1951 BILLS

By the middle of July, 231 questionnaires had been received. One hundred and sixty-nine members answered one or more questions. One hundred and sixty-one an-

swered the first question on the percentage of U.S. architecture to be presented in the *Journal*. Opinions varied from wishing 100% American to 5%; most wish 50% American and 50% architecture outside the U.S. and several noted the possibility for more Asiatic and South American material. Some practical comments were, "depends on quality of articles" and "according to material available." One hundred and six wished for the bibliography but only 37 of them would prefer it to articles. Eighty-six were in favor of a listing of articles by members; many commented it would be covered by the bibliography and one dissenter wrote, "We aren't a mutual admiration or self-glorifying society." Sixty-nine favored a multilith edition if not too expensive.

The second question asked for suggestions for the annual meeting. These have been given to the New York Committee and many will be incorporated in the program for the New York meeting, January 25-27. As most members were not in favor of a half day's program in Philadelphia, it will be omitted.

Different suggestions were made for the future of S.A.H. Those most often made were four: 1. more student members, 2. more foreign members and articles by them, 3. more regional groups, 4. more cooperation with existing local societies and a concerted effort to strengthen the preservation movement and to list important buildings in all areas before they are destroyed. Other suggestions were for S.A.H. to get a discount for members on architectural books, a joint meeting with the Aesthetics Society, more intelligent criticism of contemporary architecture, a summer school of measured drawing, and a critical index of outstanding books and articles every five years.

HOWARD MYERS MEMORIAL AWARD

The first Howard Myers Memorial Award, plans for which were described in last December's issue, was announced on November 16 at a luncheon at the Architectural League in New York. This award was organized by friends of the late Howard Myers, for 22 years the publisher and editor of the *Architectural Forum*. It was given on the basis of "the best-written, most progressive and most influential writing in periodicals" between August, 1947 and November, 1950. Dr. Walter Gropius of Harvard University received the \$500 Award for his article, "Not Gothic but Modern for Our Colleges," in *The New York Times Sunday Magazine* of October 29, 1949. First Honorable Mention went to Dr. Walter Creese, Editor of the *Journal of the S.A.H.*, for "Architecture and Learning: A Collegiate Quandary," that appeared in the *Magazine of Art* for April, 1950. Second Honorable Mention went to new S.A.H. member, Jean Murray Bangs, for "Prophet Without Honor," an article on the Greene brothers, in the May, 1950 *House Beautiful*.

